

Your **MEGA**
monthly mag!

WOW!
53 AMAZING
TRUE-LIFE
STORIES...

PLUS!
12 FANTASTIC
CASH PRIZE
PUZZLES!!!

May 2015
chat
Very, Very Best Of
Issue 5 PASSION SERIES

I stink you'll love
MY PET SKUNK!



STABBED 20 TIMES

**TWITTER
KILLER**



Murdered
by her evil
boyfriend

**told the
world Nat
would die**



76
BUMPER
PAGES

Wedding **WONDERS**
25-page special!
**Mum's cancer
GOT ME
A HUBBY**

**TIED UP AND
RAPED**
when I
was 7
My childhood
was stolen



**Contact lens
bug was
EATING
MY EYE**



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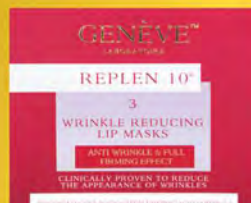
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PAGES YOU JUST CAN'T PUT DOWN!

Chat Best Of Special

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Welcome...

Have we got a mega mag for you! As well as delving back into the weekly archives for some of the best Chat stories, we've also added a 25-page special section, *Wedding Wonders*.

There's loads to make you gasp. Like Tracie's tale on p26. Her big day became a riot when yobs stormed the reception.

And poor Tracey (p32), who discovered her Tunisian toy boy fiancé had wed someone else!

As always, you'll find lots of gripping crime stories, too.

Emma's brother was murdered because someone made up a lie about him (p52).

Heartbreaking.

There's also inspiring weight loss reads, plus plenty of cash prize puzzles!

And keep an eye out for *Chat Summer*, in shops from 21 May.



Rachel Williams,
Chat Best Of editor

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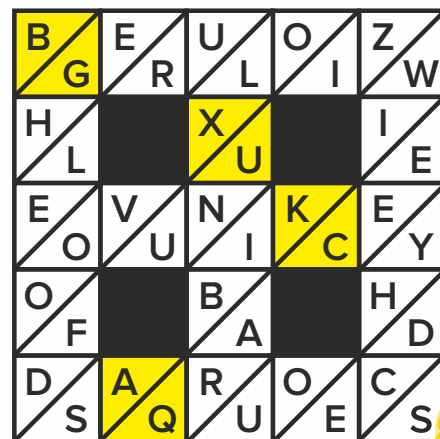
- 46 Quiz
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SPLIT CHOICE

Son is a type of music that originated in which country? Reveal a completed crossword by crossing out one of the two letters in each divided square. When you have finished, rearrange the remaining letters in the yellow squares to reveal the answer. See **HOW TO ENTER**, below.

Puzzle 1
£25



Your answer:

Easy-peasy!

TO ENTER Turn to page 73 for details



Monster went on Twitter

to plot poor Nat's murder

By Adele Jarvis, 50, from Swanley, Kent

Pushing the trolley round the supermarket, my daughter Natalie, 23, stopped in her tracks.

'Just going to say hi to Adam,' she smiled.

I glanced over at the skinny lad by the bakery counter.

Busted!

'Is he your boyfriend?'

I teased.

'Mum!' Nat gasped. 'He'll hear you!'

But we both laughed about it. Natalie skipped over, beaming.

That was a yes, then! Nat had known of Adam Whelehan, 23, for years.

Now, in June 2012, it seemed things had stepped up a gear.

Minutes later, she caught up with me at the checkout.

'I'm meeting Adam tonight,' she said, casually.

'Are you now?' I winked.

And, that evening, he pulled up outside our place.

After that, the pair spent more and more time together.

But Nat still wouldn't admit he was her boyfriend.

'We don't need a label,' she told me. 'It's nothing serious.'

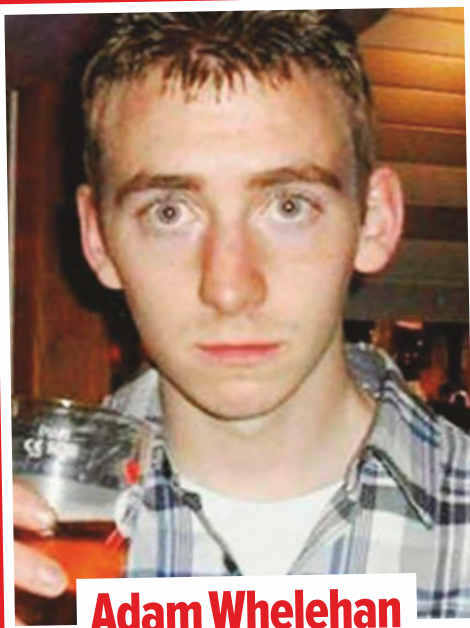
Kids, eh!

Close as me and my daughter were, sometimes it was hard to keep up!

Still, I trusted her. She had her head screwed on.

Nat worked hard in her job at McDonald's, while studying towards an NVQ in IT.

HE STABBED HER 20



Adam Whelehan

THIS SICK EVIL PL KILL MY

And, since she'd started seeing Adam, she was always laughing.

So, boyfriend, mate, whatever she wanted to call him... If he was making my daughter smile, it was alright with me.

Yes, for a while, Nat seemed happy.

Then I started picking up on the fact that she was bickering with Adam.

'Lovers' tiff,' I'd say to my husband Mark, 49.

Until Nat confided in me one night.

'He's doing my head in, Mum,' she sighed.

'Maybe you're spending too

much time together,' I said.

She shrugged.

I wasn't too worried, though.

What couple didn't argue?

And things between them couldn't be too serious.

On 3 October, Nat got home from work and then Adam picked her up.

'See you tomorrow,' I smiled.

She'd told me she was coming home that night, but I knew I'd be fast asleep by then.

When I woke at 6.20am, I checked on Nat.

Her bed hadn't been slept in. I woke Mark and we tried to ring her.

Nat had known Adam for years

'Callous and savage'

Sentencing Whelehan, Judge Philip Statman said: 'This was premeditation being nurtured over a period of many weeks. You had with you a weapon with the express purpose of stabbing Natalie Jarvis to death. Your actions were callous, savage and premeditated. I am fortified in each of these views by the manner in which you gave your evidence – no sign of, or indeed a flicker of, emotion.'



Whelehan: No emotion

No answer...

'She must've stayed with Adam,' I reasoned.

But, deep down, I knew Nat always called me.

She knew how I worried.

I was terrified she'd been in a car accident, so I called 999.

When a detective turned up on our doorstep, I thought he'd come to take down Nat's details.

Instead...

'We found a body, we believe it to be your daughter and that she was murdered,' he told me.

All in one breath.

I couldn't process it.

It must be a lie.

'How dare you come here and say that!' I cried.

This man had never seen my daughter. How did he know it was Nat?

It was impossible that my bubbly girl was dead.

But there was more to the story...

Adam had turned himself in. Admitted stabbing Nat to death. Adam?

It was all too much for me to take in.

We called Nat's big sister Gemma, 27.

All cried together.

We clung to the hope that

TIMES

CKO'S AN TO Y GIRL



Nat and me were very close

there had been some kind of sick mistake.

But, later, when we were taken to the morgue, there was no more hiding from the gut-wrenching truth.

Nat's body was on a table, shrouded in a white sheet.

Just her face was visible.

Her beautiful face.

She looked like an angel.

I couldn't help crying out.

Rushed over and kissed my precious girl.

The whole time, I was

sobbing so hard.

I didn't want to

leave her, but

eventually we had to.

I felt hollow, robbed.

What had that monster done to her?

The investigations

continued while we

planned Nat's funeral.

When the day arrived,

250 people said goodbye at

Eltham Crematorium.

Her white coffin was covered

in red roses. As bright and

vibrant as she was.

After, I didn't know how to

carry on without my girl.

But that was just the

beginning – there was still

so much more to face...

In April 2013, Adam

Whelehan, 23, pleaded

not guilty to murder at

Maidstone Crown Court.

A second man also

denied murder.

Me, Mark and Gemma

went to court every day, but the

evidence was

so hard to hear.

Shockingly, before the attack,

Whelehan had sent messages

about killing someone.

One Twitter post read,

It's alright to kill someone

these days, isn't it? Think I

might do that.

Another read,

How to do it

#murderousmind.

And another...

Waiting for the end

to come. Wishing I

had the strength to

stand. This is not

what I planned.

He was boasting to

the world.

But my poor girl had no idea

what was in store for her.

On the night of Nat's death,

Whelehan had picked her up

with the other man in the boot.

Then, on a secluded country

lane, Whelehan got out of

the car with Nat. Launched a

brutal attack, stabbing her 20

times in the neck with a tool he used while training to be a phone engineer.

Some of the wounds he inflicted were as deep as 11cm.

She must've been so scared, I thought.

Hardest to hear was how, as Nat lay dying, she'd pleaded for one final mercy. She'd wanted to speak to me.

'I'm dying, please call my mum,' she'd cried.

In response, he'd simply broken her phone.

Then he'd returned to the car, told the other man to drive.

Pure evil.

Whelehan's defence was a joke.

He claimed that Nat had been harassing him, claiming to be pregnant. That, on the night of the attack, she'd gone for him with the weapon first, and he'd acted in self-defence.

Obvious, cruel lies.

Thank

God the jury saw through him.

After a trial lasting three weeks, they returned a guilty verdict against Whelehan.

The judge later sentenced him to life and a minimum of 26 years in prison.

The other man was found not guilty and walked free.

A few days after Whelehan went to jail would've been

Nat's 24th birthday.

We went to the spot where she died, released lanterns and balloons.

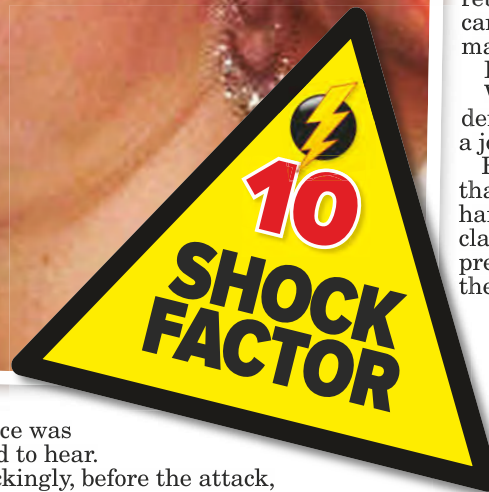
We cried and cried.

I'll never understand why Whelehan did this.

And I'll never get over the fact that Nat's gone.

I've lost my lovely girl.

I miss her every single day.



**He was
boasting
to the
world**

chat *Quick* chats

This place is
pawfect!



When is
Lassie on?



Fancy
a doggy
paddle?



Time for
walkies!

It's a
pooch
palace!



Just take a look at this mutt mansion! It's certainly not a dog's life for the lucky pups who get to stay in this £20,000 hound house.

The clever folks at Samsung created the luxury puppy pad as they were a sponsor at this year's Crufts.

The price may be through the *woof*, but it does include a doggy-sized hydrotherapy pool, treadmill and TV.

You know, in case your canine wants to catch-up with the latest *Scooby Doo* or *Snoopy* episode.

It puts a whole new meaning to the phrase *in the doghouse*!

BEDDER BELIEVE IT

My speedy skills broke a world record...

Looking at me, you wouldn't really think I have much in common with Usain Bolt.

But we share one special thing – we've both set a world record for being speedy!

In January 1991, I started as a cleaner at the local Travelodge.

I made my way up the ladder and became hotel manager in 1994.

Although I still made the odd bed when staff were ill.

Which turned out to be really handy as one day in 2013, the district manager stopped by.

'We're hosting a ceremony for London's 60th Travelodge – and I'm hoping you'll get involved,' he told me.

'Instead of cutting a ribbon, we're going to try and set a new Guinness World Record for the fastest king-size bed maker,' he went on.

So on 20 June 2013, I headed to the Travelodge in Vauxhall.

My personal best for making a bed is 58 seconds, but not in front of 200-odd people – including

the Deputy Mayor of London! Walking over to the king-size bed, I took a deep breath.

A foghorn sounded. Go!

But on my first attempt, nerves got the better of me. I put the sheet on the wrong way round, and the poppers slowed me down.

After two more OK shots, I knew I had to nail it – and fast!

I knew I had to nail it – and fast!

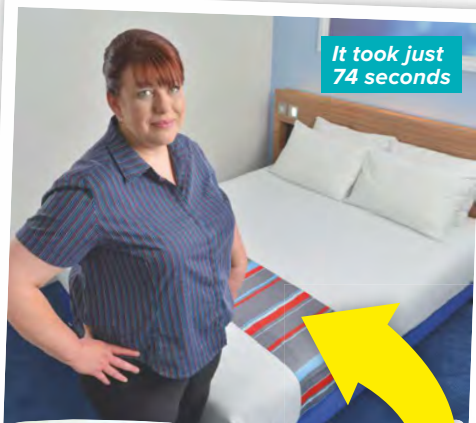
So with the crowd behind me, I whizzed through it.

'That was 74 seconds!' the host announced.

Everyone erupted in cheers.

No time for pillow talk here – I'm officially the world's speediest bed dresser!

Andrea Warner, 41, Rushden



It took just 74 seconds



I had to stay focused...



Tatt was a big surprise!

INK IT SWEET?

My grandson's gift will last a lifetime...

These days, a marriage that lasts a long time is an achievement.

And I should know – I've been married for over 50 years!

My hubby, Brian, 75, and I met in Sainsbury's when I was 16.

We've been together ever since.

So we decided to throw a party for our golden oldie anniversary!

I wasn't surprised when my grandson, Craig, 27, asked to see some pictures of us.

I was happy to let him rummage through our black-and-white snaps!

Before long, it was 22 June 2013 – party time!

About 60 guests turned up, and we had a great time dancing the night away!

Midway through, Craig came over to me and Brian.

'Can you come outside a minute?' he asked.

Curious, we walked to the entrance with him.

'I've got something to show you,' he told us, and then he rolled up his sleeve.

To my disbelief, our wedding photo was there on his inner arm... In ink!

I burst into tears.

'But that's for life now, you

silly boy!' I shrieked.

'So's your marriage,' he smiled.

Craig had taken a picture of our wedding snap with his phone, and then gone to the tattoo parlour to get it inked.

'It's your anniversary present,' he explained.

Although Brian and I aren't that big on tattoos, we thought the sentiment was so sweet.

I suppose we shouldn't have been too surprised really – he has a tattoo of his own wedding photo, too.

But we'd never imagined that he'd make a gesture like that for his old nan and grandad.

All of our party guests saw the work of art. It became the talking point of the night.

We've always been close with Craig, but now, no matter where we are, we'll be even closer!

Our wedding photo was on his arm

● **Craig Hartley, 27, told us: 'I decided to get the tattoo a few weeks before Nan's party. My mate Simon, at Black Cat Tattoo, Filey, said it'd look amazing – and he's right. My grandparents are an inspiration! I hope my marriage is as long and happy as theirs. I'm celebrating my three-year anniversary this year. Only 47 more to go!'**

Christine Stuchbery, 68, Barnsley

The email error that found me a fella!



The wrong address led me to the right man

By Adele Sidebottom, 61, from Sheffield

Flicking through my local newspaper in New York, something caught my eye.

They were asking for writing submissions.

Sounds great!

You see, I'd always been a very keen writer...

I'd kept diaries as a kid, written stories for my six children while they were growing up.

Now, in April 2001, with my youngest son about to leave home, I'd have more time to indulge my passion.

An email address was included, so I typed a message asking whether the paper wanted short stories or poetry,

and how many words.

The next day, I checked my emails and noticed one from the newspaper.

Or so I thought...

I'm very sorry but I'm not the party you're seeking, the email read.

It was signed by someone called Phil Sidebottom.

I contacted the paper, and it turned out they'd printed an incorrect email address.

So I sent a message to Phil and explained the mix-up.

He said that he'd been getting loads of messages meant for the newspaper!

You're the only person who was kind enough to tell me that, he wrote.

And, after that – well,

we just started chatting.

Phil was based in Sheffield, in the UK – thousands of miles away.

But, apart from that, we had lots in common.

We both had grown-up kids, loved writing and had similar upbringings.

I found myself looking forward to his messages.

Just his name in my inbox always made me smile.

We swapped pictures and, soon, emails moved to phone calls.

Phil would even head home from his job as a college lecturer to call me at lunchtime.

I didn't even mind that it was 6am my time!

I hadn't mentioned Phil to anyone, but

soon, one of my sons Adem picked up on it.

'You're online a lot,' he commented.

'I made a friend in England,' I said.

'Mum! You're being conned,' he said, telling me off.

'Phil's perfectly nice,' I assured him, firmly.

More than nice...

Later, I emailed Phil and admitted I had feelings for him.

'I do, too,' he said.

Suddenly, the miles between us counted for nothing.

We had to meet.

Excited, I started making plans to fly to England.

Then, disaster!

I suffered two crushed discs in

my back after an accident at work.

I couldn't get out of bed, let alone get on a plane.

So we kept writing and, at the end of the year we celebrated New Year's Eve – twice!

It was so romantic, despite being over a computer screen.

I had a feeling that the New Year would bring a lot of new beginnings for us both.

And, in April 2002, I flew to London.

I wasn't even nervous. Just really excited.

Arriving, I spotted Phil and rushed over.

He was grinning, and patted me and laughed.

'You're real,' he chuckled.

It was my first visit to England, and Phil planned a dream trip.

I had the time of my life as he showed me Stonehenge and the West Country.

He'd organised everything – and booked separate rooms.

Such a gent.

The 14 wonderful days flew by in a whirl.

'I don't want to leave,' I told Phil, sadly.

'I wish you could stay,' he said.

The minute I landed back in the States, I booked another flight back to the UK for August 2002.

Phil and I spoke every night, sent each other love letters.

Cheesy, but I really had found my soulmate.

I spent the next three years to-ing and fro-ing to England, as Phil's work commitments kept him there.

I met Phil's children in person and he met my family online!

We were so happy, but we hated being apart from each other.

Just his name in my inbox made me smile

Sealed with a kiss



We married in 2007





He's my soulmate

Me and Phil really clicked!

So, in March 2005 – with the support of my family – I moved to Sheffield for good.

It was a big commitment, but it was about to get a whole lot bigger.

'After all this, would you consider marrying me?' Phil asked, shortly after I arrived in England.

'Yes,' I said to him, tears in my eyes. 'Especially after all this!'

I called my children at once to tell them my wonderful news.

Now they'd stopped panicking that Phil was a psychotic axe murderer,

they'd come to like him!

And his kids, Melanie and Alex, were excited for us, too.

In January 2007, we married in Sheffield Town Hall – a small ceremony with 15 guests.

The perfect day. 'And all because of a wrong email address,' Phil laughed.

Now, we've been married eight years.

We're so happy – and if Phil ever emails me, I still get butterflies when I see his name in my inbox.

My plans to write stories for the newspaper led me to the wrong email – and to my Mr Right.

And that's when my love story began...

We hated being apart from each other

As told to Louise Bulgin and Steven Freeman



I'm animal CRACKERS!

Caring for crocodiles is my dream job

By Craig West, 42, from Northern Territory, Australia

TAP! TAP! TAP! Jerking awake, my heart leapt. There was a face with dark, beady eyes peering in at the window.

'Oh, it's you,' I sighed, to my 3-year-old emu, Emma.

She always woke me up when she wanted her brekkie.

'I'm coming,' I yawned.

After I'd fed her, she rubbed her head on my arm. *Sweet!*

I'd raised Emma since she was just 2 weeks old.

She was part of the family – even slept in bed with my daughter Natalie, 17, until she got too big!

My fascination with animals started when I was a kid.

I spent hours watching kangaroos and wallabies, kept snakes and lizards as pets.

When I moved to 'Croc Country' in



the Northern Territory, I was in heaven.

Studying the saltwater crocs, hand-feeding them, I became

known as 'Crocodile Man' – even put on shows!

Natalie and my son Luke, 21, share my passion, too.

Natalie's been helping me with crocs since she was 8 years old.

When I brought home Mick and Lucy – two saltwater crocs – in 2009, Natalie was so excited.

'Time for a swim, fellas,' I said, leaping into my pool with them.

People think I'm mad – but I'd never change my animal family.

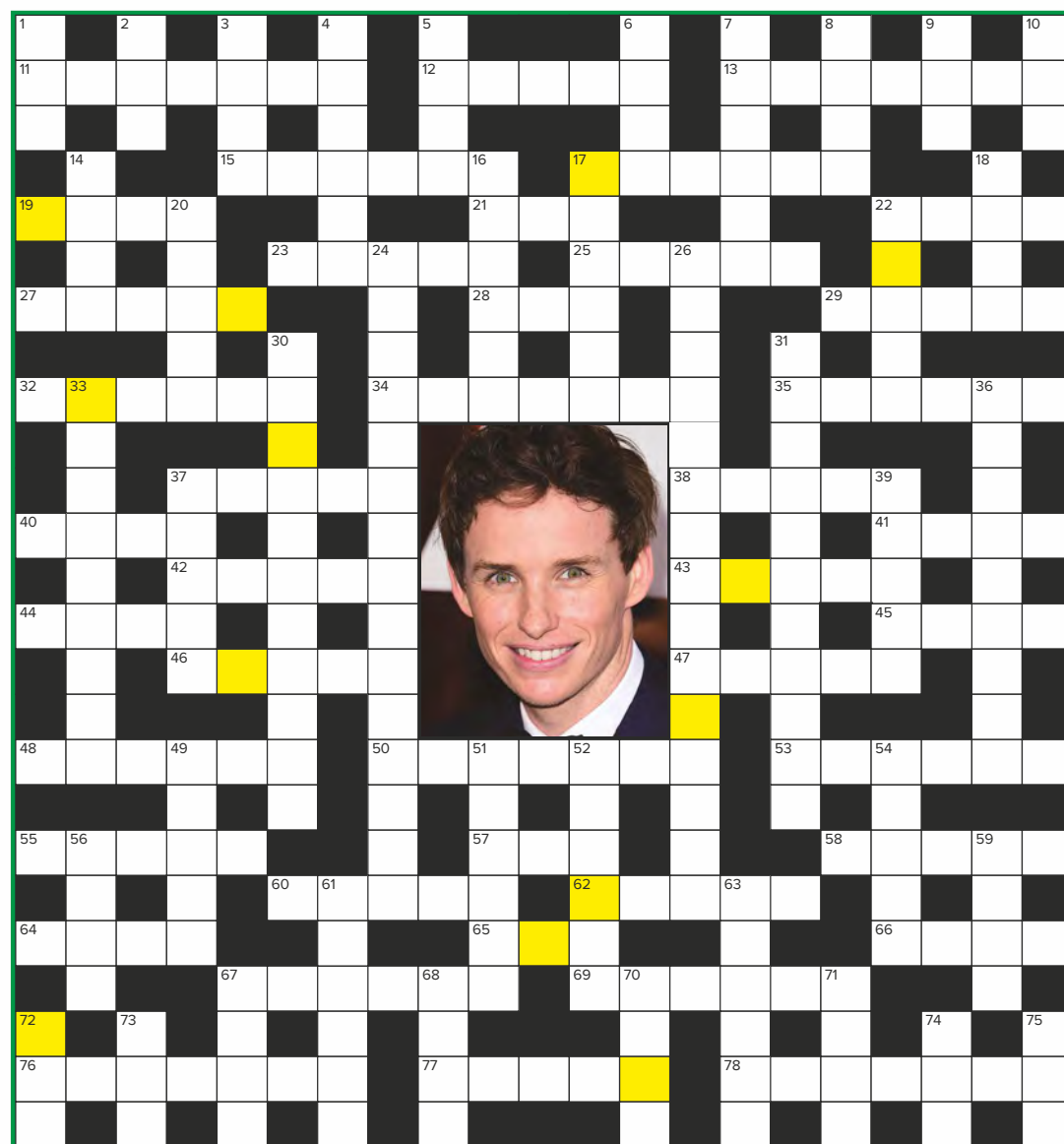
My kids share my passion, too

Win £100 cash!

Puzzle 2

£100

THE Chat BIG ONE!



Oscar winner Eddie Redmayne was in the same school year as which famous face? To find out, solve the crossword! Read down the letters in the yellow squares to reveal the prize answer. See **HOW TO ENTER**, below.

DOWN

- 1 Era (3)
- 2 Owens (3)
- 3 Notion (4)
- 4 Cotton, for example (6)
- 5 Metallic element (4)
- 6 Of the spoken word (4)
- 7 Tangoed (6)
- 8 Applications (4)
- 9 Insect (3)
- 10 Unlocking tool (3)
- 14 Stay in a tent (4)
- 16 Materialise (6)
- 17 Oar (6)
- 18 Halt (4)
- 20 Water bird (5)
- 22 Smoking item (5)
- 24 ___-Whiteley, Transformers actress who is dating Jason Statham (5,10)
- 26 Former Baywatch star known as 'The Hoff' (5,10)
- 30 Crises (11)
- 31 Difficult (11)
- 33 Persuaded (9)
- 36 Examined thoroughly (9)
- 37 Room's bottom (5)
- 39 Divided (5)
- 49 Things (5)
- 51 Large boats (6)
- 52 Birds of prey (6)
- 54 Succinct (5)
- 56 Curved fastener (4)
- 59 Sports side (4)
- 61 Anticipate (6)
- 63 Rotated (6)
- 67 Exam (4)
- 68 Headwear items (4)
- 70 Domesticated (4)
- 71 365 days (4)
- 72 Perform on stage (3)
- 73 Armed conflict (3)
- 74 Munched (3)
- 75 Colour an item (3)

ACROSS

- 11 Parent's mother (7)
- 12 Interior (5)
- 13 Time away (7)
- 15 Continent (6)
- 17 Localities (6)
- 19 Phoned (4)
- 21 Small green vegetable (3)
- 22 Felines (4)
- 23 Tiny bit (5)
- 25 Father (5)
- 27 Item worn for cooking (5)
- 28 Finish (3)
- 29 Country in 15 Across (5)
- 32 Wall (6)
- 34 Someone from Jerusalem, perhaps (7)
- 35 Courageous (6)
- 37 Into the open (5)
- 38 Small mountains (5)
- 40 Corrupt (4)
- 41 Explodes (4)
- 42 Sea (5)
- 43 Become larger (5)
- 44 ___ the Woods, recent film (4)
- 45 Unit of length (4)
- 46 Christina ___, US actress (5)
- 47 Four multiplied by two (5)
- 48 Counsel (6)
- 50 ___ Paltrow, US actress (7)
- 53 Unimportant person (6)
- 55 Bed linen item (5)
- 57 Toothed wheel (3)
- 58 Grubby (5)
- 60 Position after ninth (5)
- 62 Tall (5)
- 64 Male children (4)
- 65 Clothing item (3)
- 66 Banner (4)
- 67 Subjects (6)
- 69 Windy and rainy (6)
- 76 Vintage (7)
- 77 Type of hymn (5)
- 78 Precisely (7)

Your answer:

You can do it!

TO ENTER Turn to page 73 for details

Kids' stuff

My pygmy pets really milk me for attention



Beat cancer? *No kidding!*

Tom has prostate cancer



We hope goat's milk can help my brother's health

By Jann Woodcock, 55, from Dunstable, Beds



Padding downstairs in the morning, I was greeted by the sound of eight tiny feet lolling across the wooden floor. And a load of animal droppings along the hallway.

'What have you three been up to in the night?' I tutted to Fifi and her babies Minnie and Twiggy.



My tiny trotters!

My pet pygmy goats! Adorable.

But getting pet goats wasn't a decision I made on the hoof.

In November 2012, my brother Tom was diagnosed with prostate cancer, aged 55.

He'd read somewhere that a raw, alkaline-heavy diet could be good for cancer sufferers.

And what's a good alkaline product?

Goat milk!

Only you can't always pop to the corner shop to pick up a pint of pygmy goat milk...

So that's when I got my idea. I'd always fancied having a smallholding.

What better reason to give it a go now?

So I Googled *pygmy goats for sale*.

Gulp. They weren't cheap! But they were very cute.

So, £780 and a few weeks later, there were five goats roaming around the garden!

'They're called Primrose,

Gerty, Fifi, Pippin and Arthur,' I told my hubby Richard, 55, who shook his head in disbelief.

We'd had them for three months when pregnant Fifi went into labour.

The more the merrier!

I knew her kids would need warmth, so they'd have to stay inside the house.

Which is why I was coming downstairs to find little 'presents' each morning...

Still, when I looked at their adorable little faces, I didn't mind one bit.

'Admit it, it's nice having them galloping over to greet you in the morning,' I said to Richard.

'Our houseplants have seen better days, though,' he laughed.

OK, so Fifi and her kids had had a good nibble on them, but we could forgive that!

After all, now the goats are part of our family.

And they certainly keep us laughing.

Like the time in February 2013, when our lodger, Graham, 50, came home from town.

'You'll never guess who I just ran into at the bus stop!' he

grinned.

In behind him trotted Pippin.

'It looked like she was waiting for a bus,' he chuckled.

Now, Primrose and Gerty have had two kids each – Paphodilly and Chocalilly, and Ian and Paul, who were named after friends.

Now the goats all live in the garden.

And, yes, they've eaten all my pretty tulips and bluebells!

I've collected and frozen enough milk for Tom, who lives 76 miles away, for when he wants it.

Meanwhile, Tom's doing OK – blood tests have shown that his cancer levels have reduced.

We hope he recovers, but he's definitely feeling well now.

And I think that's something worth bleating about!

The goats are part of our family

● Tom Van den End says: 'The goat's milk isn't a magic cure, but I hope that by changing my lifestyle I will be able to rid myself of cancer.'



Kai was born 12 weeks

early after my snowy smash

By Jade Newsome, 20, from Bridlington, East Yorkshire

Me and my sister Amy are like best friends. And, being 28 weeks pregnant with my first child, I needed her more than ever.

Mum to 4-month-old Mason, Amy, 22, was full of fab advice.

On 13 February 2013, I'd nipped over with my boyfriend Martin Ireland, 25, when I felt a sudden, sharp twinge in my tum.

Darting to the bathroom, I saw I was leaking a water-like fluid.

Terrified, I ran downstairs. 'Let's get you to hospital,' Amy said.

'I'll drive,' Martin insisted. It'd been snowing heavily, so flinging on coats and scarves, we bundled into the back of the car.

Thankfully, Scarborough

Hospital was only a 30-minute drive away.

Although I was worried about heading off in the icy conditions, I wouldn't rest until I'd seen a doctor.

But we got caught in a blizzard, with snow lashing down on the windscreen.

Then suddenly...

Bang!

A car smashed into the back of ours, spinning us around.

And then I saw it... We were being shunted into the path of an oncoming vehicle.

Screaming, I shut my eyes as our car skidded and crashed into the other car.

It felt like a bad dream as we finally came to a stop.

An eerie silence filled the car.

Dazed, I slowly opened my eyes and looked across at Amy. She was knocked out, blood covering her face. But she was alive, making groaning sounds.

'Everyone OK?' Martin said.

'Amy's passed out. We need an ambulance,' I replied, shakily.

Hearing Martin on the phone to the

emergency services, reality hit.

We could've died!

And what about my baby?

Hearing sirens racing towards us, I tried to open the car door. But it wouldn't budge.

'We're trapped,' I panicked.

The paramedics were great, and tried to calm us down.

'I'm pregnant,' I blurted.

'We'll get you checked over soon, try to relax,' they said.

It took two-and-a-half hours for firemen to cut us free.

Then an ambulance raced us all to Scarborough Hospital.

Martin only had a cracked

rib, but Amy was badly injured.

She had a punctured lung, a broken collarbone and broken ribs.

Amazingly, apart from whiplash, I was fine. But still, docs were concerned.

'We'll keep you in overnight for observation,' they said.

The next day, I was outside getting some air when suddenly, everything went black.

When I came round, I was lying in a hospital bed with a doctor standing over me.

A car crash nearly killed my baby



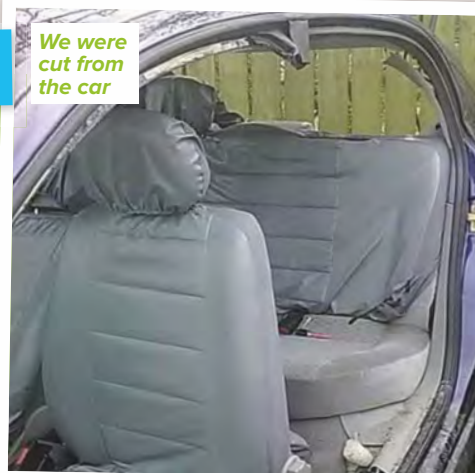
A tube helped Kai to breathe



Double delight
Me and Kai with Amy and Mason

Killer problem

Placental abruption happens when the placenta, which helps to nourish a growing baby, comes away from the inner uterus after a trauma. It causes bleeding in the mother and can cause the death of a baby.



We were cut from the car



I had no idea he'd been born!

'What happened?' I asked. 'We found you passed out. You'd lost four pints of blood,' he said. 'Although wearing a seatbelt saved your life, it pressed on your stomach, causing a placental abruption.'

It meant the placenta had peeled away from the wall of my uterus, starving my baby of oxygen and causing my bleeding.

And there was more...

'We had to give you an emergency Caesarean,' he said.

What? I'd given birth without knowing!

'But he's 12 weeks early!' I sobbed.

My baby had been taken to Hull and East Yorkshire Women and Children's Hospital.

'I missed the birth of my baby, and I can't even see him,' I cried.

An agonising three days later, I was transferred to Hull, too.

Surrounded by wires, baby Kai looked so tiny.

Plus he had a tube in his throat to help him breathe.

And he only weighed 2lb 5oz.

'I'm afraid he only has a 10 per cent chance of survival,' a doctor said.

'He only has a 10 per cent chance'

I visited Kai in hospital every day for a month.

Sadly, Martin and I split, but I stayed strong for Kai.

He soon started to pick up, but then, about six weeks later...

'Kai has necrotising enterocolitis in his bowel,' a doctor said.

Common in premature babies, the infection was causing the healthy parts of his bowel to start dying – and it was spreading fast.

He had antibiotics for seven days and luckily that worked.

As he hadn't developed properly in my womb, Kai also had brittle bones.

But finally, in June, almost five months after the crash, Kai was allowed home.

He's my little miracle.

Chick out my NEW BODY

I ditched fried dinners and lost over 5st!

By Tasha McGill, 22, from Middlesbrough

I logged onto Facebook the day after my engagement party. Couldn't wait to see the photos!

It'd been a brilliant night – my first after having my son Kai six weeks before. But when I opened up the photos, I couldn't believe it.

Who was that blobby whale squeezed into a tiny pink dress?

I had no idea I'd got so big.

I'd always been slim before but, being happy with my boyfriend Chris, 26, I'd let things slip.

He was a footballer, so he could eat what he liked – and I kept up.

There's a dish in Middlesbrough

called a parmo – fried chicken with cheese sauce and cheese on top. With chips. We had four a week!

Then, when I got pregnant, there'd been a few complications and I had to rest – an excuse to watch telly...

Chris proposed at Christmas, our baby Kian was born in March 2011, and then I was too happy to worry about my weight.

Until those photos...

I joined WeightWatchers, weighing in at 16st – massive for my 5ft 7in height. I had a year to get down to my goal of 10st before the wedding.

Out went the parmos and in came healthy home cooking.

The pounds dropped off. In the first month, I lost 12lb and, after six months, I'd lost 3st.

I'd take Kian out in his pushchair for an hour a day.

By June 2012, I was 10st 12lb.

The size-12, pale pink wedding gown I'd bought the previous December had to be taken in twice!

On my big day, I felt like a princess – but had to stuff my dress with chicken fillets because it was too big!

I've kept the weight off, and now I'm a WeightWatchers leader.

I love helping other people feel this good!

I had no idea I'd got so big

Fat snaps shocked me into action



I look and feel great!





I was only 7 when evil Phillip attacked me

By Tina Takle, 44, from Bristol

Everyone deserves to be happy, right? Especially my mum. She'd split from my dad when I was 3.

Although my mum Joyce showered me with love, while I snuggled up with my fave teddy each night, she was alone. So sad.

Then, when I was 4, she met Phillip Britton.

I was only little, but I knew he made Mum happy.

He was chubby, with dark, curly hair. But the way he acted gave me the creeps. 'Come and sit on my knee,' he'd smirk, pulling me up onto his lap whenever Mum was out.

Then he'd kiss me. But not the kind of peck you'd give a little girl. A proper kiss... Gross!

And wrong. But, a successful taxi driver, he was outwardly kind and polite. On the surface, he was a great father figure.

Everyone thought Mum had bagged a good 'un.

So I never let on to anyone that I hated him.

Then one summer's evening, when I was 7, my world was turned upside down.

Phillip had let me run to the sweet shop armed with my pocket money, while Mum was at bingo.

'Don't dawdle,' he warned. 'I promise,' I beamed.

Skipping there and back, I couldn't wait to scoff my haul.

'I'm home!' I called five minutes later, closing the front door behind me.

Phillip didn't say a word. Odd.

Still, too happy to care, I darted up the stairs.

But seconds later, I heard the heavy thud of Phillip's footsteps behind me.

I felt a tingle of fear as he marched into my room, just a towel draped around him.



Phillip Britton

'Sit here, next to me,' he said, patting the space beside him on my pink bed.

I shuddered with fear, but did as I was told.

Before I knew it, he'd tied my hands together above my head.

'Stop it!' I cried, as Phillip pinned me down.

But he didn't say a word. Just rolled his heavy body on top of mine and forced himself on me.

Terrified, I squeezed my eyes tight shut, swallowed a scream as pain seared through me.

After what felt like forever, it was over.

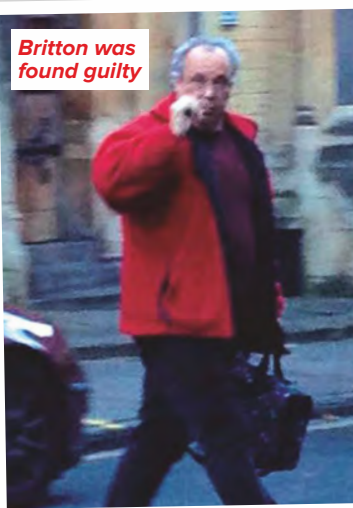
'Let's get you in the bath,' Phillip said, as if nothing had happened.

But I could barely catch my breath I was in so much pain.

'It hurts,' I sobbed, hobbling to the bathroom.

But that vile monster ignored me, as he turned on the hot tap.

Then he put me in the bath.



Britton was found guilty

SICK stole my

I tried to relax. Willed the agony to ease.

But as I stared at the water, I felt sick.

It was turning deep red with blood. My blood.

Turning, I saw the look of sheer horror on Phillip's face.

But the pain was too much. Closing my eyes, I drifted into darkness.

When I woke, I was in hospital surrounded by concerned doctors and nurses.

How had I got here?

It felt like a bad dream as I heard Phillip explain what had happened.

'She fell on a toy tractor,' was what he claimed.

Dazed and confused, I went along with his sickening story.

Besides, I didn't want Mum to know the truth.

What would I say? Would I be in trouble?

I'm afraid Tina's injuries are

severe,' I heard a doctor tell Mum, gravely.

I was scared and in pain as I was wheeled into theatre...

But I didn't tell anybody why. Back home two days later, I tried to act normal.

But every time I caught Phillip's eye, I flinched.

What if he raped me again?

But Phillip never came near me after that. We carried on as we always had, with Phillip being kind and polite as before.

It wasn't until four months later that the horrific truth came tumbling out.

Mum was telling me off for something trivial and I just blurted out, 'I didn't fall on the toy - he did it.'

Heart thundering, I looked up to see if Mum was angry.

But she'd turned ghostly pale. 'What did he do to you?' she asked, taking my hand.

I sobbed uncontrollably

He'd tied my hands together

Getting help...

Sexual abuse is the fifth most common reason children contact Childline. Research shows it's hard to recognise sexual exploitation. The shame experienced by the victim and the belief that the grooming is their fault prevents many from reaching out. Childline: 0800 1111. If you were abused as a child, contact The National Association for People Abused in Childhood (NAPAC) on 0800 085 3330 or www.napac.org.uk

RAPE

childhood

as I relived that sickening night.

Mum's face fell in horror, and I saw a flash of anger in her eyes...

'Get your stuff,' she said, pulling me into her arms. 'We're leaving!'

We went to my nan's, about two hours away by bus.

But my ordeal wasn't over.

'We need to report an incident,' Mum said, holding my hand at Bristol police station the next day.

My whole body shook as I drew pictures explaining what Phillip had done to me.

Phillip was arrested and charged but...

'Don't make me go to court,' I cried.

Back then, it wasn't possible to give evidence via video link.

I wanted him locked up but, at the age of 7, it was all too much for me.

So, I retracted my statement and police dropped the case.

Afterwards, I desperately tried to block out the abuse.

But Phillip's brutal attack was always there, lurking in the darkest corners of my mind.

In my teens, I turned to drink to try and numb the trauma.

Then, at 17, I got my own place and attempted to make my own way in life.

But living in the same area I'd sometimes see Phillip, looking like he didn't have a



The attack left me traumatised

care in the world.

How dare he!

But I hadn't pressed charges.

Now, surely, there was nothing I could do?

So, gradually, I got my life back on track.

Put what had happened behind me.

Although I did have relationships, they never lasted.

I couldn't trust another man – not even the dads of my three gorgeous children.

Still, being a mum changed everything.

I loved my kids.

They brought the joy back into my life. Gave me the strength to carry on.

But then, in September

2011, something changed. My kids were 23, 20, and 10.

So the youngest was just a little older than I was when I was raped.

Suddenly, the horror of what had happened hit home...

Phillip had been my mum's boyfriend and I'd been only 7!

I felt sick knowing exactly what Phillip was capable of.

Worse, if he'd raped me, then he could do it to another child.

I couldn't let that happen.

I knew then that I had to face my past.

Report Phillip.

'My mum's boyfriend raped me when I was 7,' I trembled to police.

I was terrified. It'd been almost four decades, what if they didn't believe me?

But the police were fantastic.

Phillip was arrested a few days later.

I finally got justice

Finally, in November 2013, Phillip Britton, 63, stood trial at Bristol Crown Court.

His first trial, which was held in April 2013 at the same court, had resulted in a hung jury.

That pervert still had the nerve to claim that falling on a toy tractor had caused my internal injuries.

That was when I discovered I'd needed 40 internal stitches.

Thankfully, at the retrial in November, he was found guilty of rape.

On 6 December 2013, he was sentenced to 10 years in jail.

That night, I slept soundly for the first time in 37 years.

Now, with the love and support of my new partner, I'm looking forward to the future.

I want other victims to know it's never too late to speak out.

It took me nearly 40 years to get justice but, finally, that monster is behind bars – where he belongs.

I'd needed 40 internal stitches

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www.dogstrust.org.uk

Now I can see *the real me*



I let a TV show give me an extreme make-under...

By Hannah Norman, 18, from Cwmbran, Monmouthshire

Flicking my black, bouffant hair and flexing acrylic talons Wolverine would be proud of, I tottered along in 4in heels to catch the bus into town.

'Oi! Oompa Loompa!' some bloke yelled at me.

Whatevs! Like I hadn't heard that one before!

My orange tan, huge hair extensions and bright clothes, made me a target. Every time I walked down the street, people laughed, stared and pointed...

'Doesn't it bother you?' my friend Liz asked, as we walked around the shops later.

'It doesn't matter what people think,' I forced a grin.

I'd first got into tanning when my mum Gab, 51, and my older sister Claire, 26, had started doing it about six years earlier.

I loved the way it made me feel confident, glam.

Dad even treated me to my own spray-tanning machine. I used it every single day.

The process was easy, but it dyed my nails brown. Which meant I had to wear acrylics.

But I loved the mad designs. My skin was tanned, my nails wild... and soon I had



I'm loving the natural look

hair extensions and was piling on the make-up.

But there was a problem...

'I didn't get into that college course,' I told Mum back in June 2012.

I'd wanted to do Childcare at college, but even after an interview, I didn't get a place.

I went for lots of jobs.

But it was always: thanks, but no thanks!

Is it because of how I looked?

But it'd been so long since I'd gone out without the tan, hair and make-up, I was scared I wouldn't look like me without it.

Then, one afternoon in town with my dad, Bryn, 51...

'Hi, I'm from the show *Snog Marry Avoid?*,' a woman smiled. 'We're filming today, I wondered if you'd like to take part?'

'I don't have to snog anyone, do I?' I snorted.

She laughed and explained that it was a make-under show.

'We show people like you how gorgeous they can be without all the make-up,' she explained.

'Give it a try,' Dad grinned.

Would they snog, marry or avoid me?



People called me Oompa Loompa!

So I agreed straight away!

First, my photo was shown to loads of lads around Cardiff.

They were asked if they'd like to snog, marry or avoid me.

I knew what they'd say. But I had to watch the video anyway.

'Too much make-up,' said one. 'I can't even see her eyes,' said another.

Avoid! Avoid! Avoid!

The time had come for me to scrape off all my slap, pull out the fake hair and lashes...

And then the show's stylists set to work.

A couple of hours later, the new me was ready.

I was blindfolded, taken to a mirror for the big reveal.

'Oh my GOD!' I cried, stunned by what I saw.

Short hair, natural make-up, a floral dress...

'I look really nice!'

I gasped.

Tears started to prickle.

I didn't need to hide under my extensions any more.

A photo of the new me was given to more blokes.

This time, they all agreed they'd snog me

— apart from one who wanted to marry me!

'You look beautiful!' Dad beamed, proudly.

And my mum couldn't believe her eyes when we got home.

'It's amazing!' she grinned.

And almost straight away, I went for another interview — this time at Next.

And guess what? I only got it!

The new me means business!

I told myself.

I love working in fashion and I've just started designing my own jewellery range. All of it totally classy, of course!

None of this would've happened without being on *Snog Marry Avoid?*

Underneath all those layers of fakery, was the real me.

And now she's out, there's no stopping her!



An incredible transformation!

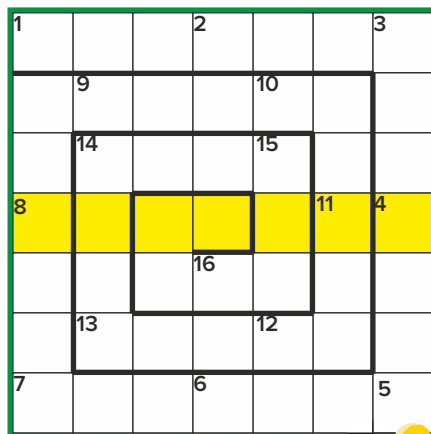
Win £50!

SPIRAL WORD

Puzzle 3
£25

Spin-off sitcom *Frasier* was set in which US city? Starting from 1, fill in the grid in a clockwise direction with four-letter words. The last letter of each word becomes the first letter of the next word. The answer will be revealed across the yellow squares. See **HOW TO ENTER**, below.

- 1 Nought
- 2 Gemstone
- 3 Old musical instrument
- 4 Nobleman
- 5 Lengthy
- 6 Sport
- 7 Ado
- 8 Croon
- 9 Acquire
- 10 Fingertip cover
- 11 Amount carried
- 12 Expensive
- 13 Stink
- 14 Osculate
- 15 Wound with knife
- 16 Unruly child



Your answer:

Have a go!

WORDBUILDER

Dorper, Lonk and Zwartbles are all breeds of what kind of animal? Starting with a 'P' add a letter and shuffle the letters to make a new word each time. Rearrange the letters in yellow to spell out the answer to the question. See **HOW TO ENTER**, below.

Puzzle 4
£25

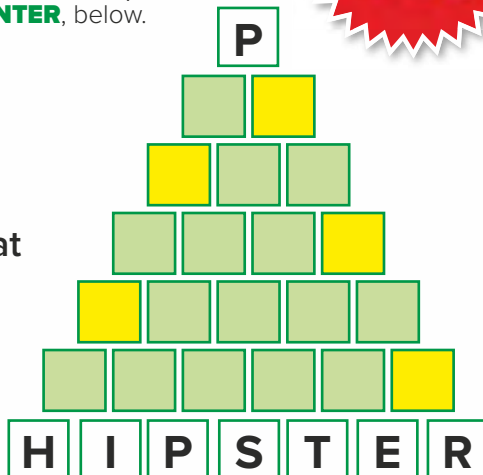
Gym class

For every

Ready to eat

Steeple

Pass away



Your answer:

TO ENTER Turn to page 73 for details

Love this!

chat True-life



I had just five hours to organise the ceremony...

By Lynette Kilbride, 37, from Chorley, Lancashire

Twinkly, bright blue and full of laughter – it was his eyes that did it. David Kilbride, then 39, was the perfect gent. We met through friends back in July 2011.

Hit it off straight away and my girls – Erin, now 7, and Ffion, 4 – were big fans, too.

Within six months, he'd moved in with us.

Life would've been perfect – if it wasn't for one thing...

'When I was 24, I had a valve replaced and a pacemaker fitted in my heart,' he told me, early on. 'Docs reckon I'll need a heart transplant at some point in the future.'

I didn't dwell on David's condition, though.

David couldn't walk too far, and would need a nap when he felt tired. But he was so full of life.

Never more than when our baby girl Brogan arrived in April 2012.

'You were made to be a dad,' I told him.

He doted on Brogan, leapt out of bed if she cried at night.

A perfect family. So, in July 2012, we got engaged. Set the date for August 2014.

Then, in January 2013, David's health began to go downhill.

He was constantly tired, would grow breathless.

'I'm worried,' I admitted.

By March, he started coughing and being sick, and he was admitted to Wythenshawe Hospital.

On 11 April, Brogan's first birthday, the consultant had news for us.

'We've tested David's BNP levels – a hormone that shows when the heart isn't happy,' he explained. 'The normal

A race our b

range is 20-30, but David's is 1,140.'

It meant he needed a heart transplant – and fast.

I burst into tears.

'I thought that was decades away,' I sobbed. 'What if he doesn't get a new heart?'

'Then he'd have around a year,' the consultant told me.

Later, at Brogan's birthday tea, I tried to keep a smile

on my face.

'I want to be your wife – whatever happens,' I whispered to David.

'Then let's bring the wedding forward, just in case,' he said.

So we rescheduled for August 2013, stepped up the wedding plans.

Our vision was a full-on church wedding with a reception for 120 people at Brook House Hotel.

And my heart was set on a gorgeous, white dress...

But the day we bought our rings, David suddenly took a turn for the worse.

At hospital, tests showed his heart was failing. It was awful.

'What if something happens

Tests showed his heart was failing



I couldn't wait to marry him

e to plan big day



Me and my
hubby David

before a donor is found?' I gasped, horrified at the thought. 'Let's get married in hospital,' suggested David.

I knew that was the answer. 'You'll need to get an emergency wedding licence,' our priest said.

I got straight on the phone. 'We need to prove you're hospital-bound,' I said to David. Then it was a waiting game.

On 24 May, at 9.20am, the register office called and dropped a bombshell.

The registrar was only free to

come in that day. 'You need to be at the hospital at 2.30pm today so the registrar can marry you,' I was told. 'Bring all your paperwork and they'll approve your licence then.'

Five hours away!

Overwhelmed, I burst into tears and called my mum, Marie, 57.

'How can I plan a wedding in five hours?' I yelled, panicking. 'I'll rally the troops!' she said. David was as calm as ever. And so happy.

'We can do this!' he chirped. 'Go to the salon, get a dress, then go straight to the hospital,' my sisters Andrea, 35, and Rosie, 32, instructed. 'We'll take care of the rest.'

With my hair freshly cut and dried, I nipped into the nearest shop I could find. Tesco!

There'll be no bridal frocks here, I thought.

But I spotted a pretty blue-and-white dress that matched my topaz engagement ring.

I whizzed through the checkout, then raced round to the hospital.

David's room was energised.

The nurses kindly cleared out the furniture and filled the room with white flowers and balloons.



We married in hospital

Then our families arrived.

My sisters had dressed my girls in gorgeous, flowery bridesmaid dresses and tiaras.

'Amazing!' I gushed.

Someone thrust a beautiful bouquet into my hand.

There was even a cake, topped with a tiny mouse bride and groom – my 'something borrowed' courtesy of my mum.

'You really have thought of everything!' I giggled.

Finally the registrar arrived.

'We have to do this right, Mum,' insisted Erin.

Linking arms with my dad Rich, 61, the girls led me down the 'aisle' – the hospital corridor.

In the room, I beamed.

Weak as he was and still attached to a drip, David was standing up.

Dressed in a short-sleeved shirt and dark jeans, he stayed on his feet for the whole ceremony.

Then...

'I now pronounce you husband and wife,' the registrar declared, smiling.

I leaned in for a kiss and our families cheered. Next thing, confetti rained down on us.

Well, white paper from inside a hole punch – the nurses had made it!

We celebrated with wedding cake and bucks fizz.

It wasn't the wedding I

thought we'd have back when we'd first got engaged.

But as I stood in my Tesco frock, being showered with paper from a hole punch, I couldn't imagine a more romantic day.

'Perfect!' I said to David.

My hubby was every bit as handsome as the day we met. And I'll never forget how happy we both were on our wedding day.

David had his transplant in July 2013, and he's been doing well ever since.

In 2014, exactly a year after our wedding, we renewed our vows with a gorgeous white church wedding.

I'm thankful for my hubby every single day.

Nurses filled the room with flowers

Donor info

More than 10,000 people in the UK currently need a transplant. Of these, 1,000 will die every year (or three per day), as there are not enough organs available. For info, visit organdonation.nhs.uk or newstartcharity.org

chat *Slim Club*

These inspirational stories from amazing weight-loss wonders could give you the boost you need to help shift those extra problem pounds...

MY RESOLUTION MADE A BIG DIFFERENCE...

I made a New Year pledge to get back my old figure

In 1989, when my son Michael – now 20 – was 6 months old, I first lost weight with Scottish Slimmers.

Ten years ago, once my daughter Olivia started school, I became a Class Manager and I've loved helping my members slim.

But, after a family bereavement and comfort eating for a year, I was almost 16½st and a size 18.

So, in January 2012 I vowed, before the year was out, I'd be a size 12 again.

With the Positive Eating Plan Made Easy, I was able to save up 25-cal credits during the week to use at the weekend to allow

me to go out for a meal or have a few drinks.

By May, I'd lost almost 3½st and was a size 14 – and I reached my goal of a size 12 by November!

Several of my members have said that knowing I'd also struggled with my weight was reassuring – and if I could do it, so could they!

● www.scottishslimmers.com

**Karin Corrigan, 49,
Banchory, Aberdeenshire**



**THEN
16ST 5LB**



**NOW
10ST 12LB**

I BEAT THE FLAB – AND FEEL FAB!

Dropping six dress sizes has given me a lift – and loads of extra energy...

With no job, no income and no reason to go out, I felt tired, depressed – and fat!

I always thought I ate healthily, but I ended up a size 16, and weighed 11st 3lb – and I'm only 4ft 11in tall.

I was grieving. I'd been a child minder for Scott, who suffered with epidermolysis bullosa, which meant he blistered with friction.

Unfortunately, he died in March 2011, just before his 17th birthday.

Then, in April, I found Herbalife via Facebook.

I couldn't wait to get started.

Within three days, I had so much energy and felt fabulous!

Though my weight didn't go down for six weeks, my family

and friends noticed a change.

I've lost 4st 1lb and dropped six sizes!

I'm proud of what I've achieved... and I know Scott would be, too.

● www.herbalife.co.uk

Elaine Horn, 57, Skipton, North Yorkshire



THEN
11ST 3LB

NOW
7ST 2LB

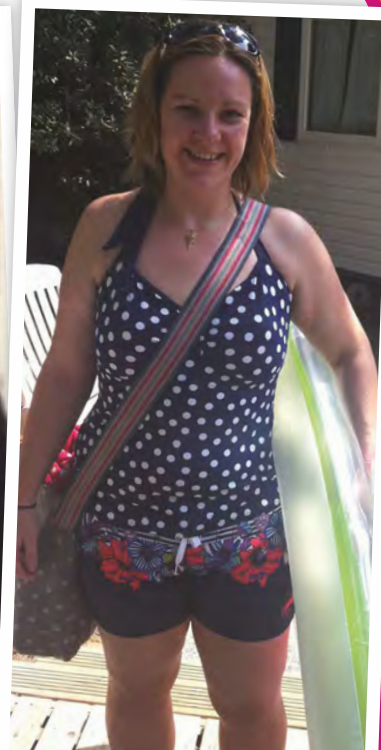
I needed to lose weight



I was in denial



THEN
22ST 7LB



NOW
13ST 12LB

COP A LOAD OF MY NEW BODY!

I lost weight to join the police force...

Id always wanted to work for the police force – but at 22, weighing over 22st, and a size 28? No chance!

In denial, I avoided mirrors, wore baggy clothes.

While at uni, I went on holiday to Majorca and, when I saw the photos, I wanted to cry!

So I cut back, and got down to 18st and a size 18.

I signed up for a ski season and, working long hours and skiing all day, I lost over 4st.

But I put it all back on!

So I started working out. I did a 5k race, then a 10k, then sprint triathlons. They were hard, but when I got a chance to do the London Triathlon for Macmillan Cancer Support, I couldn't say no.

Since losing 8st, I've become a British Transport Police Community Support Officer, and I hope to become a PC soon,

something I could've never done when I was a size 28!

● www.macmillan.org.uk/londontriathlon

Mairi Aitkin, 33, East London

When I saw photos I wanted to cry

Slain by the brutal 'Scissor Sisters'

Linda and Charlotte Mulhall were guilty of a grisly killing...

Spirits were running high following the St Patrick's Day celebrations in Dublin on 20 March 2005.

But 10 days later, some local youths made a grim discovery...

A human leg, its sock still on, was found floating in the city's Royal Canal.

Police divers were dispatched into the murky waters and soon most of the rest of the male body – in seven separate parts – had been discovered. The torso had been brutally slashed.

But the dismembered man's head and penis couldn't be found by officers.

A ritual murder, decided detectives. So they turned to Dublin's African community to help identify the body.

Eventually someone recognised the T-shirt on the savaged torso.

It belonged to Farah Swali Noor, a 38-year-old Kenyan

who'd moved to the UK in 1996.

Suddenly, police attention turned to Farah's girlfriend Kathleen Mulhall and her daughters, mother-of-four Linda and her younger sister Charlotte.

Initially, all three denied any wrongdoing. But weeks later, Linda made a shocking confession.

Contacting police, she admitted her involvement in the killing.

When forensics officers searched Kathleen's flat in Ballybough, North Dublin, the full horror of the story began to unfold.

The place had been cleaned with strong detergent. But there were still traces of blood that matched Farah's.

Linda and Charlotte – dubbed the 'Scissor Sisters'

by the press – were arrested in the August. Their mum Kathleen fled abroad.

The women's story was staggering, but it wasn't until their trial at Dublin's Central Criminal Court in December 2006 that the full, gruesome details of the Farah's killing were revealed...

While the St Patrick's Day celebrations had been in full swing, this troubled family's evening had descended into chaos.

Fuelled by ecstasy and vodka, as darkness fell, Kathleen and Farah

stumbled back to their flat with Linda and Charlotte.

Farah was apparently 'someone who'd fight or get into rows at the drop of a hat'.

He had a history of violence towards Kathleen. And that night, the couple rowed on the way home.

At the flat, drugs and alcohol coursed through their veins.

But, instead of Kathleen, Farah turned his attentions to

Charlotte tore through an artery



Victim Farah Swali Noor

Linda, pulling her close and whispering something into her ear.

'Farah, get your hands off me,' she begged, but he was too strong.

Linda wasn't even sure what he'd said.

'I did not understand but I know it was dirty,' she later explained.

A heated argument followed, as Charlotte tried to free her older sister from Farah's grip.

'Ma kept saying to me and Linda, "Please kill him or he is going to kill me,"' Charlotte said.

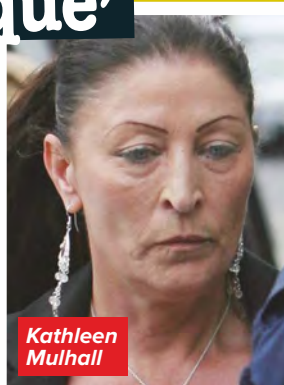
'Then she got the hammer and the knife and she gave them to me and Linda. He wouldn't let Linda go and I cut him on the neck.'

Slashing Farah's throat with a Stanley knife, Charlotte tore through an artery.

Stunned, Farah staggered around,

'Grotesque'

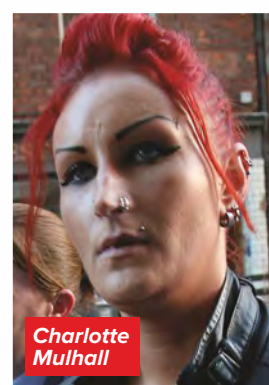
Jailing the Mulhall sisters for Noor's brutal slaying, Judge Paul Carney said, 'This is the most grotesque of killings that has occurred within my professional lifetime.'



Kathleen Mulhall



Linda Mulhall



Charlotte Mulhall



Charlotte in prison

mumbling 'Katie', his pet name for Kathleen.

Then he fell back into a bedroom, hit his head on a bunk bed, and collapsed to the floor.

Though he was defenceless, Linda began her frenzied attack.

'I picked up a hammer and hit him on the head loads of times – a good few times,' she admitted.

She'd struck with such force, that hammer marks were left in the floor.

Meanwhile, Charlotte sank a bread knife so deep into Farah's body that it punctured his lungs, kidneys and liver.

Farah Noor was dead. His body had around 20 stab wounds.

Gripped by panic, the women then spent five hours laboriously dismembering his body in the flat's bathroom.

Linda sliced at Farah's body in the shower, while Charlotte sat on the toilet as she sawed off his legs. The house was a bloodbath.

The sisters then made several trips to the canal, carrying body parts in black bags and throwing them into the water.

Linda put the head into her son's school bag, took a bus to

Tallaght in South Dublin, then buried it in a park.

But after a heavy rainstorm, she panicked it'd be unearthed. So she retrieved the rotting skull and took it to several places.

Moving it for a final time, Linda told police she'd 'kissed the bag and told Farah I was sorry', before drinking a litre of vodka at the spot.

Farah's head and penis have never been found.

The sisters denied murder.

They pleaded not guilty, claiming provocation.

But Charlotte Mulhall, then 24, was convicted of murder and received a mandatory life sentence. Linda Mulhall, then 31, was found guilty of

manslaughter and sentenced to 15 years in jail.

Kathleen Mulhall was finally tracked down in February 2008, hiding out in London.

The following May, she admitted cleaning up the crime scene and concealing evidence. She was jailed for five years.

Noor's mother Someo, too poor to travel to Dublin, said she was relieved that someone was brought to justice.

She'll never see her son again, but at least the so-called Scissor Sisters are behind bars.

He had
around
20 stab
wounds

A blast from THE PAST!

My vintage style got me into modelling

By Frankii Wilde, 26,
from Tyne and Wear

Clicking through the pictures, I was stunned. 'Wow,' I breathed. Red lips, curled hair, hourglass shape – how had I never seen her before?!

It was 2005, and I was studying Graphic Design and Technology in Middlesbrough – and I'd just discovered burlesque star Dita Von Teese.

'She looks incredible,' I said to my friend.

Dita's style wasn't just gorgeous – it was familiar, too.

When I was young, I'd spent a lot of time with my grandparents,

watching old 1950s musicals on TV.

I saw a lot of Elvis films, too.

The 50s looked like such a glorious time, and the women's style was something else!

Even though I was only 18, the 50s look felt like 'me'. I'd been through lots of fashion phases – Goth, punk – but with my platinum hair in curls and red lippe on, I felt so confident. 'You look amazing!' friends said.

Some compared me to Marilyn Monroe – what a compliment!

I fell so in love with the 50s, that I turned it into a career.

After I graduated, I became a burlesque dancer and model.

My new career meant I had to do a lot of self-promotion on Facebook and social media.

Still, with hard work, I became successful, fast.

From jobs at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival,

to photoshoots in Milan – my life became a glamorous whirlwind!

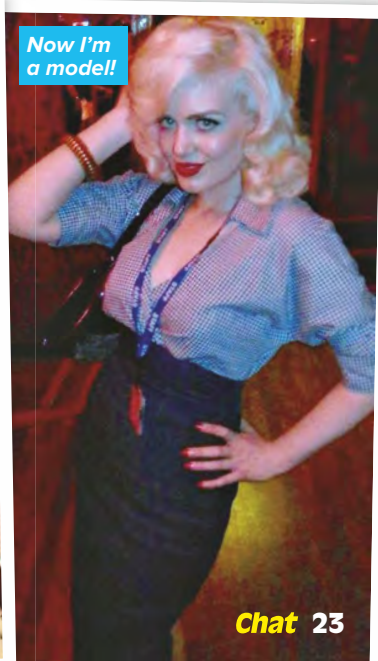
I might be a blast from the past, but with my hair in victory rolls, I feel like a million dollars.

And as Marilyn said, 'I'm very definitely a woman and I enjoy it!'

The
50s look
felt like
'me'



I love the
1950s



Now I'm
a model!



**...I COULD
BE ON**

LIFE!

DEATH!

PRIZES!

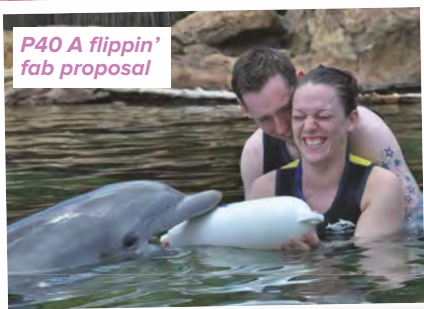
Go to LifeDeathPrizes.com
The ultimate boredom-buster

Wedding WONDERS

25-page
special!



P28 Holy matrimony!



P40 A flippin' fab proposal

It's a mass of marriages!



This way to be married!



There were 100 couples



To have and to hold...

Talk about a BIG DAY. These snaps were taken during a free mass wedding in India in June last year. The colossal ceremonies are planned by social organisations to help families who can't afford the high wedding and dowry costs. At this ceremony in New Delhi,

100 couples tied the knot in front of one another. *That's a lot of cold feet!* The organisation also provides the grooms and brides with their wedding finery and gift them presents such as sewing machines and jewellery. And here we were thinking that planning a big day for *one* couple was tricky!



Drunk louts started a brawl with our guests!

By Tracie Cowan, 50, from Tenby, Pembrokeshire

I've had an idea,' I told my daughter Stacie, 23. 'I'm going to plan a surprise vow renewal for your dad and me.'

'Great idea!' she grinned. Jimmy and I had met 23 years ago.

I'd been working as a taxi driver and Jimmy had hailed me over.

It was a fare to remember, and six months later we got married.

Time passed happily by, and we had three beautiful children, Scott, William and Stacie.

Jimmy had four children from a previous relationship, and we both adored our big family.

While lots changed over the years – I'd lost a whopping 10 stone since our wedding – our love remained.

That's why I wanted to do something special.

There wasn't a dry eye in the pews

But there was one problem. 'How are you going to keep it secret?' Stacie asked.

She had a point – in our small town news travelled quickly.

So I swore everyone to secrecy.

I decided to coincide the big day with our 25th anniversary.

It gave me just 18 months to save and arrange it all.

'You don't do things by half,' my mate Kelly joked.

I began putting aside £50 a month from my wage as a charity shop manager.

As Jimmy worked away in the week, he was none the wiser.

Months went by and I hired an ex-serviceman's club for the reception and booked St Mary's Church in Tenby for the ceremony.

Where we'd wed all those years ago.

I'd bought my outfit online, and when it arrived I rushed upstairs to try it on.

'Mum you look beautiful,' Stacie gushed.

It was

everything I'd hoped for.

On my first wedding day I'd been 21st, so it'd been a stretch finding a gown that fit.

Now a size 12, I was finally able to wear the dress of my dreams.

I stored it at my 76-year-old dad Mickey's house.

Everything was falling into place.

Just over a month before the big day I arranged for our friend Denny, 24, to come over.

His girlfriend Sarah had just given birth to a baby boy, Joey.

Denny asked Jimmy to be Joey's godfather, telling him the christening was being held on 8 November 2014.

But little did Jimmy know the christening was just a ploy.

He'd actually be walking in to his own wedding!

Jimmy fell for it hook, line and sinker.

Next I sent out invites to the 120 guests.

On the bottom I'd written: *Shhhh... Don't tell Jimmy – it's a surprise.*

On the morning of the wedding, Jimmy drove me to work.

'See you at the christening,' I said.

Once he'd left, some friends came and picked me up and we put the finishing touches to the venue. Then I got my hair and nails done.

'You look absolutely stunning,' Kelly said, as I twirled in my dress.

At 3.30pm I waited nervously by the church altar.

Five minutes later



there was still no groom.

Where was he?

Then the church doors creaked open... and in walked Jimmy!

The whole church erupted in applause.

A look of utter confusion flickered across Jimmy's face.

Then he shook his head in disbelief.

Tears filled his eyes as he walked down the aisle.

Once he'd reached the altar I read out a poem I'd written.

'I've been thinking about you all day long...' I started.

By the end there wasn't a dry eye in the pews.

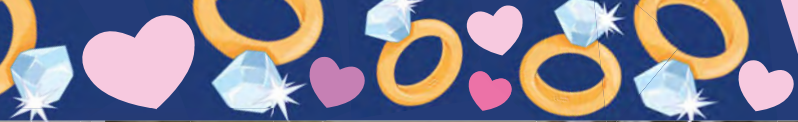
After, we headed to the club for the reception.

'I can't believe it,' was all Jimmy could say.

By 8pm Dad was starting to get tired.

I walked him to the car along

One big disaster
We've never even had an apology



...
OT!

Wedding WONDERS

25-page special!



It had all been so perfect!



The police were called...

pulled me inside. We went upstairs where we watched the brawl unfold below. Doormen from nearby pubs had seen the ruckus and were trying to help. All I could do was weep. *My perfect day, completely ruined.* Ten minutes later 19 cops arrived.



The guests were bruised...

The whole street was filled with police cars, blue lights flashing. *My wedding day had turned into a riot!* Eventually the louts were escorted to their private bus. A couple of guests gave statements to the police. Most of the others headed home battered and bloody.



And my dress was ruined!

One guest even had two broken fingers. Poor Kelly had purple marks all up her back. 'Please don't let it spoil your day,' she urged. But deep down, I couldn't help thinking that those thugs had ruined everything. My wedding dress was muddy and ripped and Stacie had bruises covering her arm. 'They're monsters,' I raged. At midnight, Jimmy and I sat down with a bottle of champagne. 'It's appalling what they did, but renewing our vows was the best moment of my life,' he said. So now that's what I try and focus on. *Jimmy's face when he walked through the church door... Saying our nuptials...* Still, it's really hard not to feel angry. There have been no charges made, and I've had no apology. So unjust. That day I had something old, something new, something borrowed and guests left black and blue!

with my twin 5-year-old grandsons, Thomas and Gary. Nearby, I noticed a group of lairy lads.

Bouncers were refusing them entry to a pub. After saying bye to Dad, we headed back to the party. Only the group of drunken yobs followed us.

'This is a private function,' I told them at the entrance. 'F*** you!' they shouted. They looked threatening, so I put my arms round my grandsons.

Then one of them came up to us, dropped his trousers and waved his tiny todger around.

Others joined in. 'This is my wedding day,' I tried to reason with one of them. 'Move along or I'll call the police.'

His face contorted in anger, and suddenly he threw me to the ground. Seeing the commotion, guests came outside.

Sprawled on the floor in my wedding dress, I watched in horror as all hell broke loose. *Fists were flying... Bottles thrown...*

The thugs were like animals possessed. Soon there were over 30 of them. My guests were desperately trying to stop them getting

The thugs were like animals possessed

As told to Joe Brothwell. Photos: PA Real Life/Matthew Horwood

I was married by Batman



Holy matrimony! My groom came dressed as The Joker!

By Ali Butrym, 23, from Texas, USA

I won't rest until you two are together,' my best friend Ashley grinned. She was convinced her pal Ryan and I were meant to be.

'You have so much in common,' she continued.

'Like what?' I asked, rolling my eyes.

'Umm...

You both have Batman tattoos,' she laughed. 'You're both totally bonkers about him!'

It was true, ever since I was little I'd been crazy about the Caped Crusader.

While my sisters were playing with their Barbie

dolls, I'd sit, engrossed in comic books instead.

Once I got a little older, I even got a tattoo of the bat symbol on my shoulder.

And matchmaker Ashley thought this was reason enough to set her mate and me up.

Months later, in December 2010, she even paired us off to walk down the aisle at her wedding.

We hit it off, but there was one tiny detail

she'd forgotten to mention. Ryan, 28, had a girlfriend.

'Matching tattoos or not, he's strictly off limits,' I told her, firmly.

Yet three months after her big day, Ryan and his

We had loads of shared interests



We even had comic cakes!

girlfriend broke up.

Ashley thought we were going to become the best pairing since, well, Batman and Robin!

But while we started seeing more of each other, it was just as friends.

Ashley did have one thing right, though.

Ryan and I had loads of shared interests.

We'd spend hours hanging out, talking about comics, music and hockey.

Then, one day in November 2011, we both came to realise that our feelings went a little deeper than friendship.

'I think I might really like you,' Ryan admitted.

And much to Ashley's delight, we started dating.

'I knew it!' she squealed when I told her.

Time passed happily by.

Two years later, Ryan and me went to his uncle's house for Thanksgiving.



Bat's a bit crazy!

Our guests got into the comic book spirit

One evening, I came back from shopping to find Ryan waiting for me in the driveway.

'Come with me,' he urged. 'I've got something to show you.'

'What's going on?' I asked, suspicious.

But he didn't respond, just took my hand.

He led me round to the garden, which backs on to a beautiful view of the Rocky Mountains.

Then, I was stunned to see him get down on one knee.

Suddenly fairy lights lit up the garden.

She spelled out the words: *Will you marry me?*

Next, he pulled out a small treasure box.

25-page
special!



**It was a
who's who
of comic
characters**



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As told to Erin Cardiff. Photos: Irish Eyes Photography

Win £75 cash!

MIRROR IMAGE

Which of the four pictures below is a mirror image of the larger picture? See **HOW TO ENTER**, below.



A



B



C



D

Puzzle 5
£25

Your answer:



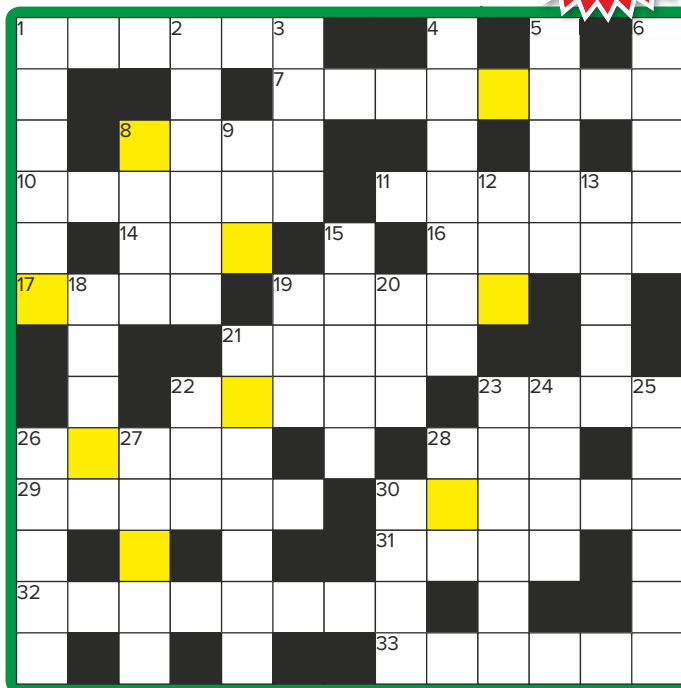
Love this!

EASY X-WORD

Who stars opposite Margot Robbie in 2015 crime comedy, *Focus*?

To find out complete this crossword. Unscramble the yellow squares to reveal the prize answer. See **HOW TO ENTER**, below.

Puzzle 6
£50



ACROSS

- 1 Nicknamed (6)
- 7 Indian or African mammal? (8)
- 8 Furniture item (4)
- 10 Subsided (6)
- 11 Mythical creature (6)
- 14 Not existing before, fresh (3)
- 16 English river (5)
- 17 Method, manner (4)
- 19 Weasel-like animal (5)
- 21 Sacred book of Islam (5)
- 22 Snake (5)
- 23 Outdoor event (4)
- 26 Call on (5)
- 28 Hearing organ (3)
- 29 Facet (6)
- 30 Recess (6)
- 31 Mines (4)
- 32 Proof (8)
- 33 Threaded fasteners (6)

DOWN

- 1 Remove weapons from (6)
- 2 Baby's soft shoe (6)
- 3 No longer alive (4)
- 4 Austere (7)
- 5 Big (5)
- 6 Feat of daring (5)
- 8 Beach material (4)
- 9 Hardly any (3)
- 12 Skill (3)
- 13 Beginning (5)
- 15 Scatter (5)
- 18 Fertile area in a desert (5)
- 19 Concession, bribe (3)
- 20 Rowing blade (3)
- 21 Cooking room (7)
- 22 Contend (3)
- 23 Cause, influence (6)
- 24 Cupid (4)
- 25 Happenings (6)
- 26 Manservant (5)
- 27 Cleave (5)
- 28 Biblical priest (3)
- 30 Imitates, mimics (4)

Your answer:



You can do it!

I vowed to get thin!



My old wedding dress

inspired me to beat the bulge

By Heloise Doherty, 39, from Redditch

What a sight I must have looked! The silk material was stretched to bursting and my bust oozed from the tight bodice.

It was January 2013 and I was trying on the dress I'd worn when I married my hubby, Jason, 10 years earlier.

I had piled on 7st since that day and I knew it wouldn't fit.

Then I had an idea. 'It might not fit now, but it will,' I said to Jason.

This dress was just what I needed to help me slim.

As a child I had struggled with my weight and by the time I was 11, Mum was taking me to a dietitian for weekly counselling sessions.

When I hit my teens, I was stuck in a cycle of yo-yo dieting.

Then, aged 19, I booked a trip to South Africa, and dieted down from 14st to 10st 7lb.

Naturally, it didn't last.

I arrived home in January 1995 to begin my midwifery training in my home town of Nottingham.

Munching on sweet treats and carb-laden pasta dishes while I studied, the weight piled back on.

I met Jason, then 27, a

transport manager, in 2000 and he proposed the following year.

We decided to marry abroad and booked our Cuban wedding for 2003.

Only, 10 months before, I was a size 22 and 19st.

Jason loved me whatever my size.

'But I don't want to be a fat bride,' I told him.

So in March 2003, I joined Weight Watchers.

That May, I picked my beautiful wedding dress, ordering it in a size 20.

The pounds melted away and during each fitting the dressmaker had to take it in further.

When we jetted off to Cuba I'd lost 4st and felt gorgeous.

But I was soon enjoying the comforts of married life too much, guzzling crisps, biscuits and chocolate in front of the TV.

Then at Christmas in 2012, when I found myself struggling to breathe, I had to face facts – I was dangerously unhealthy.

So when Jason suggested we renew our vows during a cruise to celebrate our 10th anniversary, I got out my dress and made that promise – 'I won't be heavier than the day we married.'

So I joined Weight Watchers in Redditch, where I weighed in at 21st 10lb.

Within seven weeks I'd lost 12lb.



The weight had crept on

Wedding WONDERS

25-page special!



Beaming bride

I wore a brand new dress at our renewal

Now I look amazing

Every few months I'd tug on my wedding dress.

When it slid on perfectly, I whipped out my phone and sent Jason a photo.

Wow, you look really amazing, he messaged back.

But the weight kept coming off and soon I was too thin for the dress!

'I am going to buy myself

something new,' I told Jason.

And in October 2013, when we renewed our vows on a ship in the middle of the sunny Caribbean Sea, I felt amazing.

Now I'm down to a size 14 and 13st 3lb.

I thought I would never be slim, but I've finally done it. And this time, it is for keeps.



Atef made me feel so special



My fiancé a secret



Did he use my cash to marry another woman?

By Tracey Jackson, 48, from Rhyl, North Wales

Sipping on a glass of wine, I watched my friend Stacie log on to my computer. 'Why don't we see who's online?' she said, with a sly smile.

She went on Tagged, an internet dating website.

I'd met my ex on there so still had an account.

'Not interested,' I laughed.

But in truth, after being single for over a year, I'd been missing male attention.

Suddenly one guy's profile caught my eye.

He was Tunisian with boy-band good looks and come-to-bed eyes.

'Why don't you message him,' Stacie encouraged.

Atef Khadhraoui was just my type, but then something stopped me dead in my tracks.

'He's 24,' I shrieked. 'I'm 44. Old enough to be his mother!'

He was *younger* than my two daughters, Victoria, 24, and Lynsey, 26.

I don't know whether it was the wine, Stacie, or Atef's sexy eyes, but I sent him a message.

The next day he replied.

Tracey, you look like a special lady who needs to be treated right, he'd written.

My heart fluttered like a schoolgirl with a crush.

I have been hurt.

I need to be careful who I let into my heart, I replied.

Pretty soon, we were speaking daily.

He'd shower me with compliments, make me feel wanted.

'Come to Tunisia,' he pleaded, over the webcam.

I was in two minds.

Was this the real thing? Or

was he having me on?

'To me you are a princess. I love you,' he told me.

My heart melted, and I started saving to go and see him.

Due to a hernia in my bowel I was unable to work.

On benefits, money was really tight.

But in October 2010, after six months of scrimping, I boarded the plane.

Greeting me at the airport, Atef gently kissed my hand.

'I'm so pleased you came,' he purred.

I felt instantly at ease.

'It's like I've known you all my life,' I smiled.

Once at his parents' house, where we were staying, he treated me like royalty.

Soon it was time for bed.

Atef took me by the hand and led me to his room.

Then he threw me down on the mattress.

'I've wanted to do this for so long,' he whispered, kissing me passionately.

As we made love I felt like a new woman.

But afterwards, I couldn't shake a nagging doubt.

'Don't you want a girl your own age?' I asked.

'You're my woman,' he replied.

For the rest of the holiday we barely left the bedroom.

'Come back,' he pleaded at the airport.

Back home, I took out a £400 loan, and two months later I was back in Atef's arms.

The interest rate was through the roof, but my

toy boy was worth it.

Two days into my stay, I went to visit Atef's sister while he stayed at his parents'.

When I returned music was blaring.

What's he up to? I wondered.

Suddenly Atef appeared at the front door and dropped down on one knee.

'Tracey, be my wife?' he asked.

All his friends and family stood by, watching.

I really loved him, but I felt a bit pressured.

Was it too soon?

'Yes,' I stuttered.

Pushing my doubts aside, I enjoyed the party.

Only as it died down I caught Atef slow dancing with another woman.

At my engagement party!

'Who was she?' I seethed, later on.

I fell for his charm



He treated me like royalty

é had wife!

Wedding WONDERS

25-page special!



**I found out on
Facebook...**

'Just a friend,' he replied.
I let it lie.

At the airport Atef
looked worried.

'They're making me go in
the army,' he blurted out. 'If I
don't I'll be jailed.'

He continued: 'I can get out
of it, but it will cost £150.'

So back home I wired
him the money.

Only worse news was
still to come.

'They say I have to pay
each week to stop being
enrolled,' he fretted.

So I started sending him
£70 a fortnight.

It meant I even had to
scrounge meals at friends'
as I didn't have enough to
buy food for myself.

He'd do the same for me,
I reasoned.

After 18 months together,
there was a problem with
my benefits.

It meant I couldn't send
any money to Atef.

'Selfish cow,' he spat down
the phone.

Atef had never raised his
voice to me.

Terrified of losing him, I took
out another loan and flew out.

Once I was with him
everything was better.

Atef says:

**'Please tell Tracey
to forget me. I am
married now with my
love. I don't need Tracey.
I paid for my wedding
with my money.'**

A month later my benefit
issue was resolved and I set up
my payments to him again.

In October 2013, three
years into our relationship,
I went out again.

Only at the airport Atef said
there'd been a
change of plan.

'There's no room
at my parents'
house,' he said.

It meant I had
to pay £600 for
an apartment.

On top
of this Atef
seemed distant.

'I'm fine,' he shrugged.

But during the daytime he
disappeared for hours.

At night he barely touched me.

'Don't you fancy me any
more?' I wept.

'Be quiet and go to sleep,'
he snapped.

Back home a message
popped up on Facebook from

a woman called Mariem.

*Atef is with me, he only wants
you for your money,* she wrote.

Clicking on her profile, I felt
sick to my stomach.

It was the woman
who'd been slow
dancing with Atef!

'She's a silly girl
with a crush,' Atef
reassured me when I
confronted him.

I wasn't convinced.

Still, we spoke
nightly and I believed
we could work through

this together.

It's just a rough patch, I
thought.

Then in January 2014 my
world fell apart.

Atef posted a photo of his
marriage certificate to Mariem
on Facebook.

My blood ran cold when I
saw it.

**Terrified
of losing
him, I took
out a loan**

*He'd married her while he
was engaged to me.*

'How could you?' I cried down
the phone.

All he did was laugh.

That was the last I heard
from him.

I fell into a depression.

*How could a man who said
he loved me do this?*

Slowly I realised Atef never
loved me. I was just a walking
cash machine.

Now I've finally got my
life back on track, though
I'm still in debt.

I've calculated I gave that
conman over £7,000.

I'm convinced it funded
his wedding.

But things are looking up.

I've met a new Tunisian
guy who never asks for
money and loves me for me.

I won't make the same
mistake again.

BT calls/Credit Card readings cost £1.53 per min. Cost from other networks may be higher. Lines are open from 8.00am-1.00am every day, calls made outside of these hours will be charged. Callers must be 18+. Credit card not available in ROI. Max length for calls is 19.6 mins/credit card readings 60 mins. Text readings cost £3 plus std rate msg. Psychics will promptly reply to all messages. When you text a psychic, you will get marketing messages from Time Inc. (UK) Ltd and Chat magazine. However you can reply NOINFO at any time to unsubscribe from marketing messages. Helpline: UK 0333 202 3392 (9am-5pm, Mon- Fri). SP (UK) Spoke. All calls are recorded. Readings are for entertainment purposes only. This service is regulated by PhonepayPlus.

Win £100 cash!

WORDSEARCH

Who presented the award for Best Original Score at the 2015 Academy Awards ceremony? To find the answer place the list of actors into the grid and find the one that doesn't fit. See **HOW TO ENTER**, below.

K C V T M U R P H Y
I O O W A O X L M W
D A I T F T A W I I
M W N O I Z U E L N
A S I I T L N M L F
N J F T S B L Q E R
E G A Q L T Z A R E
L R N E E S O N R Y
P A L T R O W N Q D
K E N D R I C K A M

ANDREWS
ANISTON
COTILLARD
EJIOFOR

KENDRICK
KIDMAN
MILLER
MURPHY
NEESON

PALTROW
PRATT
TATUM
WINFREY

Puzzle 7

£25

Your answer:

Crackers!

WORDSCRAMBLER

M	H	A
C	E	C
E	K	T

Which position in chess indicates that the game is over? Using the central letter and at least three others, how many words can you find? Plurals, proper nouns and hyphenated words are not allowed. The prize answer is a nine-letter word! See **HOW TO ENTER**, below.

RATING

15 words: OK

20 words: Great

25 words: Good

30+ words or more: Excellent

Your answer:

Puzzle 8

£25

Have a go!

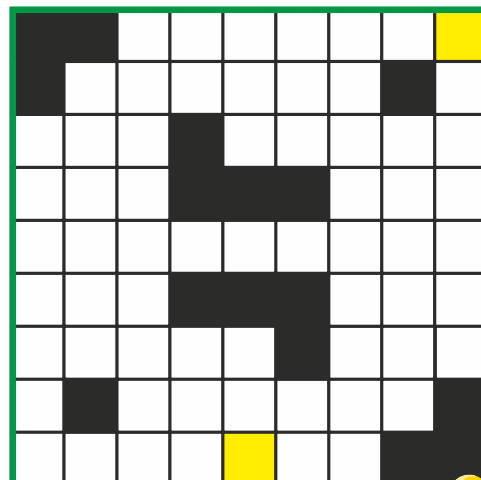
NUMBERFIT

Puzzle 9

£25

How many 'Red Balloons' were there in the title of the 1984 hit by Nena? Fit the numbers below into the grid and cross them off the list as you go. When you have solved the puzzle, read down the highlighted squares to answer the prize question. See **HOW TO ENTER**, below.

2 digits: 85 94
3 digits: 249 295
340 349 379
654 744 902
924 949
5 digits: 40493
50196
6 digits: 424946
444800
927849
953449
7 digits: 3564953
4923449
9164494
9299443
9 digits:
429942496
461693743
984549934



Your answer:

Love this!

ADDERWORD

Puzzle 10

£25

Who won Best Male Solo Artist at this year's BRIT awards? Using the clues on the left, add one letter to each of these four-letter words to make a new word, then put the letter you added into the yellow circle after the word. If you do this correctly, the prize answer will read down the yellow circles. See **HOW TO ENTER**, below.

- Silent
- Beverage
- Creature
- Woodwork tool
- Hilly
- Black wood
- Released
- Cereal
- Pine

QUIT

RINK

BEAT

LATE

STEP

BONY

FEED

GRIN

YEAR

Your answer:

TO ENTER Turn to page 73 for details

You can do it!

Me, with my guide dog Fay



I've finally met the man of my dreams

An angel helped me get my fairy tale ending...

By Gloria Newins, 69, from Gravesend, Kent

After what felt like a hundred eye tests piled into just a few weeks, I sat in the specialist's office waiting to hear my fate.

'I'm sorry, Gloria, but you're going to lose your sight over the coming years,' he said, explaining that my inherited condition was called retinitis pigmentosa.

My mind spun as his words sunk in.

I was 17, and just setting out in the world.

How would I cope?

As I could still see quite well, I tried to get on with life.

I went to Braille lessons and married my childhood sweetheart at 21.

After our son Gary was born two years later, my sight began deteriorating more quickly.

Soon I couldn't do my own shopping or make out colours.

Sadly, my marriage didn't work out and my husband and I parted after 10 years.

When I hit 30, my GP sent me on a course to help me learn the new skills I'd need as I lost my remaining sight.

During a tea break on my first day, I got chatting to the man sitting next to me.

His name was Ted Newins. We hit it off and made a point of sitting together every day.

He was born blind due to a condition called congenital rubella syndrome – caused by his mother catching German

measles during pregnancy.

But he'd had surgery and his sight was better than mine.

He'd even held down factory job – until they found out that he was officially blind!

When we finished the course, I was given a guide dog, Fay, and she was a fantastic help to me getting around.

I was still meeting up with Ted. We went on trips together, helping each other to cope as blind people.

Ted taught me and Fay some useful routes, such as from home to the doctor's, and to my best friend's house.

Ted was lovely company, but he was married with two children and 14 years older than me. I wasn't expecting more than friendship.

Even so, I always looked forward to meeting him.

He was so kind and thoughtful. My divorce had hit my confidence, but Ted made me feel like somebody again.

I knew it was wrong, but I just couldn't help it.

I was falling in love with a married man.

Soon, Ted was spending two or three days a week with me.

We never talked about marriage and he always went home to his family in the evening.

This went on for a year until, one morning, I answered the door to a

group of people. 'I'm Ted's wife,' said a woman.

She was with Ted's son, daughter and his father.

Ted's son used to drop him off near my house – I assume he followed

Ted to mine one day.

Ted came to the door and his family almost dragged him out. His last words were, 'I'll be back.'

I missed him terribly. 'He's happily married and you've got to forget him,' I told myself.

He phoned sometimes, but gradually we lost touch.

At 39, I married Ken, a lovely man I'd met a year earlier through CB radio.

A year into the marriage, I couldn't see at all.

Gary grew up and left home.

Then, in later life, Ken developed dementia, and

He was so kind and thoughtful

Ted says:



'When Gloria and I were having our affair, I was in a state of confusion.

'I loved her – and I loved my wife. But when we were found out,

I had to decide. I stayed with my wife because we had the children.

'After my wife died, I tried getting in

touch with Gloria. When she didn't respond, I thought she wanted nothing more to do with me.

'I was stunned when she rang me out of the blue. I was walking on air for the rest of the day.

'I'm certain it was her angel who sent her the dream of me, and marrying her has made me the happiest man alive.'

married the y dreams

Wedding WONDERS

25-page special!



Love sealed
with a kiss!



We married
in May 2014

*We're lucky to
have each other*

passed away in 2012.

I accepted I'd be on my own for the rest of my life.

But, one morning, I woke from a dream, my mind racing. I couldn't recall much detail, but it'd been about Ted.

It must have been the first time I'd dreamt of him in over 30 years.

Somehow, I knew his wife had died.

Did Ted tell me in the dream?

I was determined to find him.

I'd never forgotten his phone number, but it took all my courage to ring it. And Ted answered!

Full of nerves, I said, 'You won't remember who I am.'

'Gloria!' Ted gasped.

**I was
determined
to find
him**

We had a long chat and, yes, his wife had died.

After a week of calls, I invited him round for coffee.

When my bell rang, my heart flipped.

Ted had to get past the reception desk of my sheltered accommodation, through two security doors to my flat – and

he was spot on time at 10am.

I opened the door and he gave me a big cuddle.

He said he'd tried to find me through the local blind association, but I'd been in hospital and hadn't got the message.

I'm now certain I have a guardian angel who sent me my dream.

It was the angel's way of telling me Ted was trying to contact me.

One afternoon, when we'd been seeing each other for a few weeks, Ted, now 83, went down on one knee and proposed

– I thought it must be a dream again!

I said yes at once.

We married in May 2014 at the sheltered accommodation where we both now live.

Our guests gave nearly £1,000 for a honeymoon cruise.

In December we celebrated our first Christmas together.

Since finding Ted again, I've lived a fairy tale with a happy ending.

Every day, I thank my angel who made it happen.



I came to realise ditching is as important as hitching...

By Helen Meissner, 47, from Hertfordshire

I'm a master at divorce!

When I was a little girl, I knew exactly the kind of man I was going to marry. He would be a farmer. It was what I knew and what I loved – my parents worked the land and from the age of 13, I'd drive our tractor to help them.

So I saw myself with my strapping husband until death did us part.

Only it didn't quite work out like that.

I'm now 47 and on husband number four. It turns out, I'm not especially good at marriage.

Well, at staying married.

What I am good at is divorce.

I expect that sounds terrible because while everyone wants a good marriage, no-one thinks of

divorce as anything but bad.

Yet it's something almost half of us who take the plunge into marriage will have to face.

So isn't it important to do it well? Isn't the ditching as important as the hitching?

But when I found myself marrying for the first time, at 20, I had no thoughts of that – we were going to last a lifetime.

It was September 1986 and Philip* and I had been good friends since I was 14.

His dad was our local vicar and we were a family who filled a pew every Sunday, so we grew up with his.

Philip was eight years older than me and a landscape

gardener. Not a farmer, but close enough!

By the time we married, I was deeply in love.

His dad conducted the wedding and we settled down to life together.

But while Philip was laid-back and happy, I was finding myself.

And the me I found was ambitious and restless.

I set up my own business, offering in-house training to companies.

It turned over £80,000 in its first year.

But while I raced ahead, Philip stayed just the same.

In May 1991, John*, a marketing director, booked me to provide training at his firm.

We were drawn together instantly. I'd just reached my goal weight of 9st 9lb at Weight Watchers and felt fantastic, but this was a meeting of minds.

I'd thought I wanted a gentle farmer, but the business world was now my passion and that was John's world.

The attraction I felt was overwhelming. I couldn't resist.

John had three children from a previous marriage and I realised I wanted babies, too.

Philip knew he was defeated and couldn't compete.

I felt awful about leaving a great man for selfish reasons.

I wanted to take all of the blame. And I also discovered the most important rule of how to have a good divorce:

Try to stay friends.

I still loved Philip and knew I always wanted him in my life.

It also helped that he quickly met someone else absolutely perfect for him.

The four of us would meet up in our favourite pub every Tuesday night.

There was no awkwardness, just friendship and good times.

John and I married in June 1994 and our daughter Lauren was born a year later.

I even made Philip her godfather, and that tie meant we remained close.

John and I went on to have a son, Lewis, but by late 1995, our marriage was struggling.

A recession was taking its toll on our businesses and driving us apart.

One evening, on the eve of

our son's third birthday, in March 2000, we found ourselves having a frank discussion.

'We can't go on like this,' I said, finally. 'We need to take the pressure off.'

John nodded and we agreed to separate. But this, my second divorce, was tricky – children were involved.

Not just our two kids, but his three, who I loved as well.

They were now aged 13 to 18 and I didn't want to abandon them.

It's another vital part of having a good divorce.

A split affects many

people – children, stepchildren, parents-in-law, friends. All their feelings matter.

John's kids loved our big, blended family. It hurt to lose it.

And so, to keep the process as

amicable as possible, I took most of the blame again.

I accept responsibility for my part in any break-up.

If you play the 'it's not my fault but theirs' game, no-one wins except the lawyers.

I've always been my own solicitor. I've agreed every settlement with my partner, no professionals involved.

So the split was as smooth as possible under the circumstances and it meant that I could keep in touch with my stepchildren.

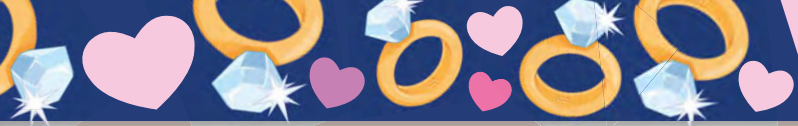
Five days after separating from John, I met my next husband, Martin*.

We met through work. He was two years older than me and a managing director of a recruitment business.

I'm 47 and on husband four

Martin was my third hubby





Wedding WONDERS

25-page special!



My first love
I thought Philip was The One



John and me



Is Pete fourth time lucky?

So many weddings...

We wed in 2003, three years after my divorce from John.

He ticked all the boxes.

By this time I had actually written a list of what I now needed in a man.

He had to be an entrepreneur, *tick*. Like children, *tick*. Confident in social situations, *tick*...

Martin was all those. But in the end, the one thing he wasn't was attracted to me.

It hurt, desperately.

I was about to turn 40 and felt utterly rejected.

I ended up in a tippy clinch

with a friend, Pete, in the kitchen at a party. Martin walked in and caught us.

The other wives in our group of friends had always called Pete 'the marriage wrecker' because their husbands spent so much time with him.

But none of us could have guessed it would end up the other way round.

It was a terrible betrayal that hurt Martin deeply.

We split in June 2007 and Pete and I settled together in Walkern, Herts, marrying a

All my divorces have been fair

relationship with now.

It makes me sad and regretful.

I wish it could have been a better parting for both our sakes.

Think about it: do you want to leave an emotional wreck in your wake, or someone stronger and self-aware and ready to find love again?

The answer should govern the way all divorcing couples treat each other as they dismantle their

lives together.

Don't knock your partner down, build him up.

I've always admitted affairs, even if there was no sex, because that's the easiest way.

Accept responsibility, be kind, move on. I believe all my divorces have been fair.

I've never been interested in which possessions I'd end up keeping, but in having a happy ever after.

So is that what I've found with Pete?

Well, we're happy, but like all marriages it's a work in progress.

Six years in, I hope I've got it right this time. But does anyone ever really know?

Someone can always change their mind in a relationship.

One day, Pete might decide to divorce me. But if that ever happens, if I'm on the receiving end, my rules will still apply.

Make it easy.

Have a good divorce. Life's too short for anything else.

year later in July 2008.

I'd learnt a lot from leaving Martin.

Such as never letting a relationship become imbalanced. During my time with him I'd given up work and had lost sight of the real me.

I also learned not to involve best friends.

It made this the trickiest of my divorces and as a result, Martin is the one ex I have no

Welcome to a whole world of romance

These touching travel tales are sure to make your heart soar

SOME-FIN SPECIAL!

A Florida dolphin helped my man pop the question

Plunging into the cool water, I stroked Thelma's grey, rubbery back.

'I've always wanted to do this,' I squealed to my bloke Keith.

Only he didn't look quite as excited.

In fact, he was as white as a sheet.

'You're not scared are you?' I teased.

It was May 2013, and Keith, my family and I were on holiday in Florida.

We'd booked to spend the day at Discovery Cove – a theme park where you can swim with dolphins.

All too soon our session was up.

But as we got out, the trainer walked over.

He'd been taking photos of Keith and I in the water.

'The snaps are blurry,' he said. 'You two get back in and I'll get Thelma to perform a trick for you.'

Fin-tastic!

He threw an inflatable buoy into the air which Thelma jumped up and caught.

She then swam over to me with it.

'I love you,' Keith whispered as Thelma approached.

Then I saw a note written on the buoy...

Will you marry me? it read.

'Yes!' I cried.

Water flipping fab way to propose!

'No wonder you looked terrified,' I joked to Keith afterwards.

We agreed to get married in 2017 so we



Keith got down on one knee

had plenty of time to save up.

Then, in February this year, I came across a competition on Facebook.

Send in your romantic proposal snap and be in with a chance of winning £1,000 holiday vouchers, it read.

It was through the Loveholidays.com website.

I emailed over our dolphin photo, and six weeks later we got a call saying we'd won!

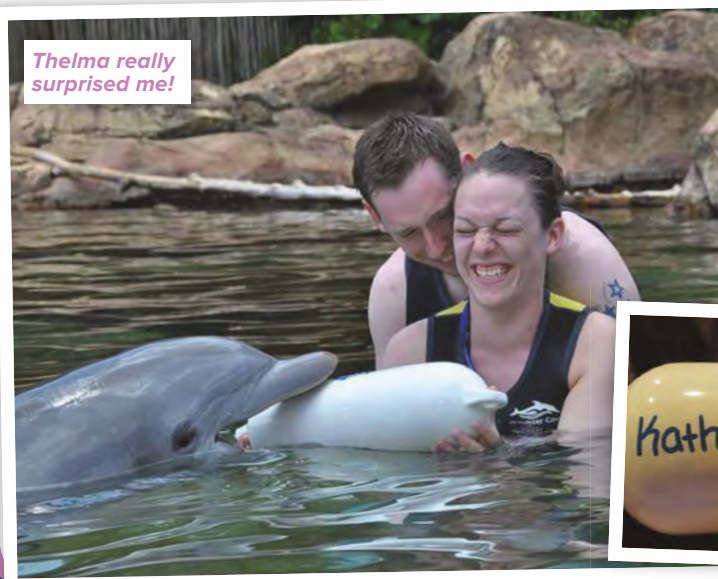
We've booked to go to Turkey in October.

The proposal of my dreams?

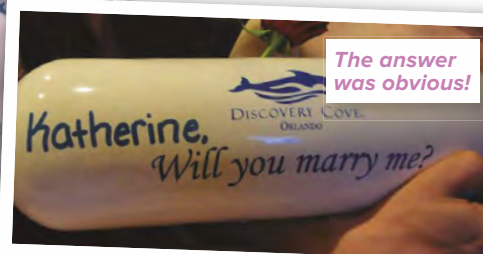
Dolphin-ately!

● Loveholidays.com

Katherine Turnbull, 24, from South Shields



Thelma really surprised me!



The answer was obvious!

I saw a note written on the buoy...

Katherine,
Will you marry me?

I SCORED A HUBBY

My footy-mad bloke loved the idea of a wedding at Barcelona's home ground

I doubt many people say 'I do' on a football pitch. But I knew it would score me big points with my fiancé.

Gary Bennett, 35, and I had met in a bar.

And it wasn't long before I discovered his love for the beautiful game.

Every Saturday we'd snuggle up and cheer on his teams – Leeds United and FC Barcelona.

Then in December 2011, while on holiday in Spain, Gary proposed.

'Yes!' I beamed.

I'd known since day one that my man was a keeper.

Back home I scoured bridal magazines and wedding shows.

'How about getting married in Barcelona?' a rep asked.

It made sense.

Gary had proposed there...

He supported a Spanish team...

She suggested the Camp Nou stadium, where FC Barcelona play.

He'll love it, I thought, and pitched him the idea.

'Amazing,' he said.

In April 2014 we flew to Spain with friends and family.

On our wedding morning I



Gary and me had a ball!

woke to a present from Gary.

It was a shirt with 'Mrs B' printed on the back.

I stuck with tradition though and slipped on an ivory dress.

Then we exchanged our vows at the stadium, before heading to the pitch for drinks.

A scoreboard message read, *Congratulations Mr and Mrs Bennett.*

Next I surprised Gary with a football signed by some of the players. Finally, we posed for snaps in one of the goals.

It might not be everyone's idea of a dream wedding.

But we had a ball!

● MarryAbroad.co.uk

Steph Bennett, 27, from Fleet, Hampshire

We headed to the pitch for drinks



I know he's a keeper!

Wedding WONDERS

25-page special!



Me and Bill needed a holiday

GOLDEN GETAWAY

Old wedding rings paid for a holiday

In 2009 my partner Bill, 56, and me had a difficult year. He'd been made redundant and money was tight.

'I wish we could just get away for a while,' I confided to a pal.

If only there was something I could do, I thought, flicking through the paper.

Then I stumbled across an article on the rising price of gold.

'That's interesting,' I said to Bill.

My thoughts turned to the jewellery box in my bedroom.

I went upstairs, opened it, and had a rummage through. Most of the pieces held sentimental value.

Only then I spotted my old diamond engagement ring and mine and my ex-husband's wedding rings.

We'd been married 20 years. But since our difficult divorce in 2000 they'd been gathering dust.

And though my ex and I were now friends, the gold bands reminded me of unhappy times.

'There's no harm in getting them valued,' I said to Bill.

'As long as you're sure,' he replied.

I headed to the jewellers who valued them at £1,200.

More than enough for a nice long holiday.

'What the heck!' I said, handing them over.

Next Bill and I went to the travel agents.

And in 2010 we jetted off to Greece for three months!

When we returned Bill found another job.

Our Greek getaway was just what the doctor ordered.

Now those three rings only conjure up happy memories.

After all, they took me from heartbreak to beach break!

Alison Brady, 58, from Glasgow,

They'd just been gathering dust



Thrilled with JACKPOT WIN!

Winning £1,250 had me and my precious pup jumping for joy!

By Lynn Bromilow, 59, from St Helens, Merseyside

LYNN'S WINNING GAME

Tiki is just one of the seven 90 Ball bingo games at Chat Mag Bingo. It's a great-value room where you can play from just 1p but still have the chance to win big-cash jackpots and enjoy great chat with the hosts and other bingo players.

When I settle myself on the sofa for a cheeky game of bingo, my little cocker spaniel

Rosie curls up next to me.

I love her to bits.

My and my hubby Neil got her four years ago.

'The house is a bit quiet,' I'd said to him one day.

So Neil had driven us to a breeder in Yorkshire so we could get a puppy.

I'd spotted Rosie at once – she was tiny, 10 weeks old, with big eyes and a gorgeous, white splodge on her nose.

My heart melted as I looked at the cute little pup.

'She's the one,' I smiled.

So Rosie came to live with us, and our son Andrew, now 27, and daughter Kathryn, 24.

We spoiled her with treats and she settled in straightaway!

She followed me everywhere – even to the loo!

It was around that time that I joined Chat Mag Bingo!

My mate Sharon had told me all about it.

'I've won over a grand,' she told me, smiling. 'And it's also loads of fun!'

She knew that I loved sitting on the

sofa, with my laptop perched on my knee, playing games.

And, when I was first married, I'd often take my mother-in-law down to the local bingo hall. So I knew just how exciting it could be.

I signed up and explored the website. I really enjoyed it.

Sometimes, after work as an administrator for a charity, I'd relax with a few games of bingo.

Often, while we were both chilled out on the sofa in front of the telly, Neil would play games on his tablet.

And, of course, my faithful Rosie would be curled up by my side, as usual.

I had won bits and bobs on the bingo and sometimes playing on the slots.

Once I won £90 and treated myself to a new coat!

Recently our boy Andrew bought his first house.

I was so proud of him – but we missed him like mad.

One Saturday, he came round to visit for

CHAT ROOM FUN!

My fave thing is the chat rooms. From day one, I met loads of lovely people – some lived miles away, others round the corner! We natter about everything. Sometimes even my dog Rosie joins in – tapping the keyboard with her paws!

the evening and told us all about his new home.

'It's great,' he grinned.

We all relaxed in front of some good old Saturday night TV.

Fancying a few games of bingo, I bought six 10p tickets for the 90 Ball Bingo game in Tiki.

I was watching as the numbers came up, and

Sofa, so good!



Rosie thought my win was paw-some!



my

It was such a surprise to win!



were dabbed off my card.

Then, at around 9pm, Andrew had to leave.

'I'd best be going now, Mum,' he said, as he started to put his coat on.

I got up to say goodbye to him, when suddenly my last number popped up.

'Hang on a sec - I've just won,' I gasped.

'Really?' Andrew asked, gobsmacked. 'How much have you got?'

I looked at my balance to double check.

'I've won £1,250!' I cried in surprise.

I started jumping up and down, whooping with delight.

Rosie awoke with a start, then leapt to her feet, and started barking!

She clearly thought my win was totally *paw*-esome, too!

Andrew and Neil couldn't stop laughing at Rosie's antics!

Andrew had mentioned to us

earlier in the evening that he needed a new washing machine for his house.

So, of course, I knew exactly what I'd treat him to.

'Well, do you still want that washing machine?' I asked him with a big smile.

As you can imagine, Andrew was thrilled with the idea so we went online right there and then and picked one out.

I was really happy that I could share some of my bingo winnings with Neil and our Kathryn, too.

I'd already given Andrew the furniture from our conservatory for his new house.

So now I was able to push the boat out and treat myself to a brand-new sofa!

And, of course, Rosie got some extra-special dog treats, too!

So, cheers, Chat Mag Bingo!

The win has been a pleasure to enjoy with my family - and, of course, we've got one very pampered pooch, too!

Words: Lianne La Borde. Photos (not actual sofa): iStockphoto



Get £35 of bingo for just £10

HOW TO CLAIM

- Join chatmagbingo.com
- Deposit £10 and enter promo **CHATPASS5G**
- You'll get £35 to play!

*New customers only. Registration required. Minimum £10 deposit. 18+ UK only. Valid until 21 May 2015. You must enter the code CHATPASS5G on registration and accept the welcome bonus when you deposit £10 to receive £25 bonus to play. 250% welcome bonus - max £100. Bonus must be wagered twice before withdrawals. Wager and cash out requirements apply. See full T&Cs at chatmagbingo.com Play responsibly. Gambleaware.co.uk

Join today!

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gambleaware.co.uk 18



Me and Dougie with Callum

We treasure the my husband



Dougie's late wife will always be in our lives...

By Leslie Paton, 49, from London

Everyone has moments of jealousy in relationships – times when you can't help comparing yourself to your partner's ex.

Wondering if you're as pretty, as clever or as kind.

Most often, you'll snap out of it, reminding yourself he's with you, not her. But my situation is a little different...

When I met my husband, Dougie, he was still grieving for his wife, Jane, the woman he'd loved for 10 years.

Even today, memories of her and their life together are still with him. But I wouldn't have it any other way.

It was January 2011 and I'd been in London for three years.

Working long hours in my job in finance meant I'd sacrificed a lot and, at 39, was still single.

I wasn't necessarily looking for Mr Right, but decided to join dating website eHarmony.

Despite being matched with a few different men, no one had really piqued my interest – until Dougie.

As I scrolled through photos of him trekking across the Scottish Highlands, I couldn't help but smile – he looked so rugged, yet boyishly handsome.

Feeling braver than I would have if I'd met him in a bar, I sent him a message, telling him how much I liked his profile – especially the touching things he'd written about his grandparents.

His response, just a short

while later, was friendly, and he pointed out that we had similar tastes in films, we both liked running and that he, too, worked in finance.

Then, in a second message, he told me about Jane.

'She passed away last year,' he wrote.

'I understand if you don't want to talk any more. I know it's a lot to deal with.'

My heart ached for him, but though I couldn't begin to imagine the agony he'd been through, I didn't reply straight away.

Instead, I sat thinking.

Was it really sensible to get involved with someone who'd so recently been widowed?

Drumming my fingers on my laptop, I realised I had nothing to lose – the worst case scenario was I might just make a new friend.

From then on, I began to look forward to his lengthy emails.

We'd talk about work, our friends and families, and even the fundraising he'd been doing in Jane's memory.

She was still a huge part of his life, and I couldn't help but wonder if he was ready to start seeing someone new.

My friends all thought that rather than pre-empting anything, I should see for myself.

On our first date that March, what was meant to be a quick coffee turned into dinner and hours spent walking around town.

I knew I was willing to do

whatever it would take to make it work.

At home that night, I went online and read every article I could find about how to date a widower. It helped me understand that our relationship might not move at the same rate as others.

From meeting his family to being intimate, everything would take longer.

In fact, it wasn't until our sixth date that Dougie finally kissed me.

Still, over the next few weeks, we grew closer. We were just like any other couple – we'd go out for meals and spend nights in, curled up on the sofa.

But as much as I tried to stem my curiosity about Jane, I couldn't stop asking questions.

Though Dougie would never talk about her unless I probed, he vowed to answer each one.

He told me about the day they'd met and when he'd finally built up the courage to approach her at the photocopier at work.

My heart ached for him



Dougie and Jane

the memory of d's lost love

He told me about how he'd proposed on New Year's Eve and how they'd been thinking about starting a family. He told me about her smile.

And then he told me about the day she died.

He'd been at home, cooking dinner, when he got a call from the hospital.

Jane, who had suffered from the heart disease cardiomyopathy, had collapsed while swimming at the gym.

As I listened to him explain that in that instant she was gone for ever, I bit my lip to stop from crying.

I didn't know how to feel. Part of me was distraught that the man I was in love with had experienced such pain.

Part of me felt guilty that I was so happy, in effect, because of that pain, and another part of me worried.

Would I always be second best?

I tried to push away my insecurities, but they kept cropping up.

The first time I walked into the home he and Jane had once shared, I saw the paintings she'd done on the wall. It was clearly Jane's space – I was only here because she wasn't.

Then, as we walked around Central Park while on holiday in New York that August, I could tell something was wrong when he fell quiet.

'I came here with Jane,' he confessed.

I suppose that's when things really changed for me.

Instead of feeling worried about how their love compared with ours, I felt lucky to have found someone so loyal.

His pain showed me what a good person he was.

Seven months later, Dougie

proposed. And three days after that, a pregnancy test showed we were expecting our first child.

'I love you so much,' said Dougie.

When Callum was born in November 2012, I promised Dougie that Jane would always be a part of our

lives, and I've kept that promise.

There are pictures of her up around our house and, when Callum is old enough to understand, we'll tell him all about her and how she helped shape the man his daddy is today.

From everything I've heard about Jane, it sounds as though we'd have been great friends.

I've laughed when Dougie told me the things they'd argue about – just like her, I have a hard time getting him to take out the rubbish.

And I've taken comfort in the fact that Jane had her flaws, just like the rest of us.

I'd be lying if I said I'd never wondered what Dougie would have been doing if Jane hadn't died. I'm sure, like we are now, they'd have been very happy.

But marrying a widower doesn't mean living in someone's shadow.

Jane's family has welcomed me, and just like she was, they're wonderful.

In May 2014, Dougie completed the Tenzing-Hillary Everest Marathon.

He raised over £15,000 for the Cardiomyopathy Association, so others don't have to suffer like Jane did.

I'm not Jane, but I am Leslie and I am loved. It's like Dougie says, it isn't about him moving on, it's about moving forward – and we're doing it together.

Would I always be second best?

Wedding WONDERS

25-page special!

Looking forward

Dougie and me will have a happy future together



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Pub Quiz

Test those grey cells...

Photos: Press Association Images/Stock

FILM/TV

1 Which of the following was a 2015 TV drama starring Julie Walters?

- a Spring Greens
- b Indian Summers
- c Autumn Roses
- d Nuclear Winters

2 Which actress is playing Bathsheba Everdene in a new film adaptation of *Far from the Madding Crowd*?

- a Keira Knightley
- b Helena Bonham Carter
- c Emma Thompson
- d Carey Mulligan

3 In a live episode of TV's *EastEnders* earlier this year, which character was revealed to have been the accidental killer of Lucy Beale?

- a Max Branning
- b Jane Beale
- c Lauren Branning
- d Bobby Beale

4 Which of the following is a 1985 film that starred Emilio Estevez?

- a The Breakfast Club
- b The Eleventh Hour
- c The Lunch Bunch
- d The Dinner Crew

5 The main character of which sitcom resided in a high-rise tower block named Nelson Mandela House?

- a Open All Hours
- b Only Fools and Horses
- c The Good Life
- d As Time Goes By

6 What, in 1962, was the first James Bond film, with Sean Connery playing the titular super-spy?

- a You Only Live Twice
- b Octopussy
- c Dr. No
- d For Your Eyes Only

7 Which of the following is a children's TV show about a girl who lives on the fictional Scottish island of Struay?

- a Kylie Margaret
- b Kelly Una
- c Kitty Agnes
- d Katie Morag

SHOWBIZ

8 What have *EastEnders* actress Jacqueline Jossa and *TOWIE*'s Dan Osborne called their baby girl?

- a Ella
- b Erica
- c Emma
- d Elise

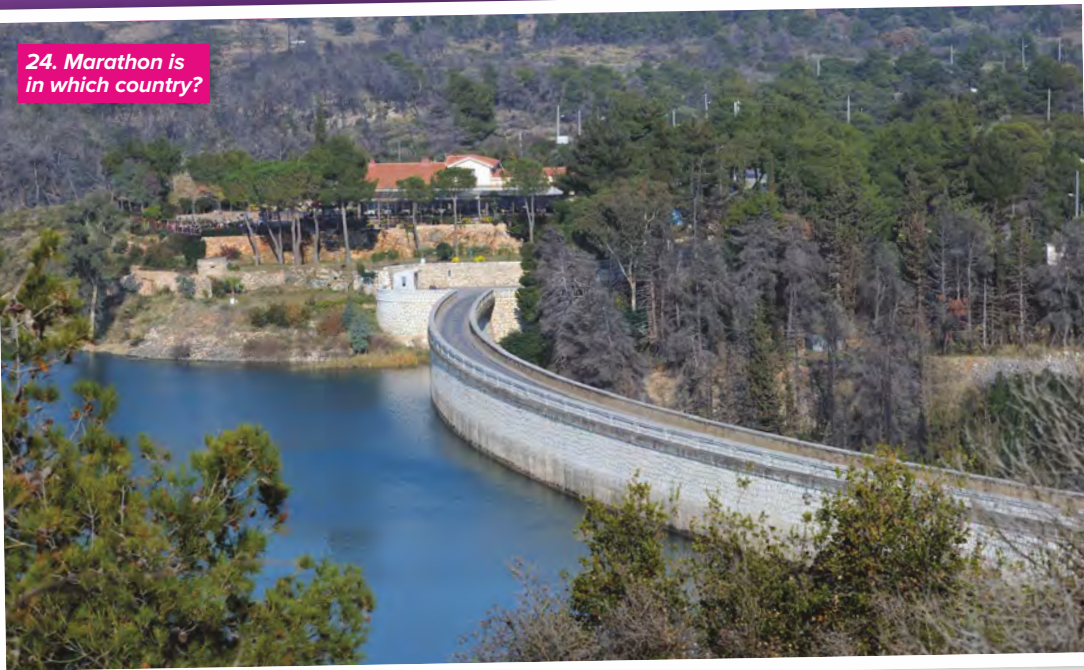
9 Which songstress fell off the stage during her performance at this year's BRIT Awards?

- a Kesha
- b Britney Spears
- c Rita Ora
- d Madonna

2. Will Keira star in *Far from the Madding Crowd*?

15. What do you know about Kelly's music?

24. Marathon is in which country?



- a Greece
- b Italy
- c Spain
- d Sweden

25 Adrian Lewis is a famous name in which of the following?

- a Rugby union
- b Golf
- c Snooker
- d Darts

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

26 Who created the fictional character of Paddington Bear?

- a J. K. Rowling
- b Mary Tourtel
- c Michael Bond
- d Enid Blyton

27 If a dish is described as "al dente" how should it be cooked?

- a For a long time, to be soft
- b Briefly, to be firm
- c In a wood oven
- d In oil and butter

28 Jakarta is the capital city of which country?

- a Indonesia
- b Israel
- c China
- d Norway

29 What is the primary interest of a horticulturalist?

- a Animals
- b Plants
- c Rocks
- d People

30 In which century did Joan of Arc live?

- a 13th Century
- b 15th Century
- c 17th Century
- d 19th Century

31 Which ancient Greek hero led the Argonauts to find the Golden Fleece?

- a Orpheus
- b Theseus
- c Jason
- d Hercules

32 Which of the below fiction by Geoffrey Chaucer?

- a The Canterbury Tales
- b The Manchester Stories
- c The Bristol Fables
- d The Newcastle Yarns

SPORT

20 Katarina Johnson-Thompson is a famous British name in which of the following?

- a Netball
- b Football
- c Track and field
- d Tennis

21 Which of these football teams is based in the London district of Holloway?

- a Arsenal
- b Crystal Palace
- c West Ham
- d Millwall

22 In which sport might you do a seat drop?

- a Swimming
- b Trampoline
- c Rugby league
- d Water polo

23 Retired footballer Eric Cantona is what nationality?

- a English
- b French
- c German
- d Italian

24 Marathon, after which the distance race is named, is a town in which European country?

21a: 22b: 23b: 24a: 25d: 26c: 27b: 28a: 29b: 30b: 31c: 32a

SNOITULOS

10 Which Hollywood actor ended up in hospital in March, after crash landing his plane on a Santa Monica golf course?

- a George Clooney
- b Harrison Ford
- c Ryan Reynolds
- d Matt Damon

11 Which reality TV star has claimed that she and her husband have been trying for a baby "500 times a day"?

- a Heidi Montag
- b Chantelle Houghton
- c Kim Kardashian
- d Katie Price

12 Which singer granted a young fan's dying wish this year by conducting a 20 minute FaceTime conversation with her?

- a Pink
- b Kylie Minogue
- c Taylor Swift
- d Adele

13 Who has confirmed that she is expecting a second child, and that she will be leaving her job as a Radio 1 DJ?

- a Fearné Cotton
- b Sara Cox
- c Jo Whiley
- d Annie Mac

MUSIC

14 Which songstress topped the singles chart with Love Me Like You Do in 2015?

- a Meghan Trainor

- b Jessie J
- c Ellie Goulding
- d Carrie Underwood

15 Which of the following was a recent Top Ten hit for Kelly Clarkson?

- a Heartbeat Song
- b Heartbreak Song
- c Heartthrob Song
- d Heartache Song

16 Which singer and his High Flying Birds recently released the album Chasing Yesterday?

- a David Bowie
- b Damon Albarn
- c Liam Gallagher
- d Noel Gallagher

17 By what name is the U2 guitarist David Evans better known?

- a Sting
- b The Edge
- c Bono
- d Axl

18 Who won the British Male Solo Artist award at this year's BRITs?

- a Sam Smith
- b George Ezra
- c Ed Sheeran
- d Paolo Nutini

19 Siobhan Donaghy was an original member of which of these girl groups?

- a Spice Girls
- b Atomic Kitten
- c Sugababes
- d Girls Aloud

23. What is Eric Cantona's nationality?



Dice Game

Pick a card and discover what is in store for you...

Trouble with your love life? Fancy someone new? Or maybe you're getting fed-up of waiting for your true soulmate. Will he ever come? Psychic expert Bettina Luxton's dice game will reveal all!

It's so easy! Simply use your own psychic powers to reveal your love destiny. There are 18 cards on this page, each with the faces of four dice. Spread this feature in front of you, close your eyes and hold one of your hands over the cards on the page.

Point one finger and rotate your hand over the page in a clockwise direction, thinking about your question as you do so.

Concentrate for 30 seconds and at some point you should feel drawn to a particular card. Put your finger on the page and open your eyes.

Now, all you have to do is call the phone number under the card to hear psychic expert Bettina read what the dice have in store for you.

The answers are at the ends of your fingers! You just need Bettina to interpret what they mean...

DICE GAME: BT calls cost 66p per minute and last approx 3-4 minutes. Cost from other networks may be higher. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390.

Card 1 If you were drawn to this card, call 09044 700 259	Card 2 If you were drawn to this card, call 09044 700 260	Card 3 If you were drawn to this card, call 09044 700 261
Card 4 If you were drawn to this card, call 09044 700 262	Card 5 If you were drawn to this card, call 09044 700 263	Card 6 If you were drawn to this card, call 09044 700 264
Card 7 If you were drawn to this card, call 09044 700 265	Card 8 If you were drawn to this card, call 09044 700 266	Card 9 If you were drawn to this card, call 09044 700 267
Card 10 If you were drawn to this card, call 09044 700 268	Card 11 If you were drawn to this card, call 09044 700 269	Card 12 If you were drawn to this card, call 09044 700 270
Card 13 If you were drawn to this card, call 09044 700 271	Card 14 If you were drawn to this card, call 09044 700 272	Card 15 If you were drawn to this card, call 09044 700 273
Card 16 If you were drawn to this card, call 09044 700 274	Card 17 If you were drawn to this card, call 09044 700 275	Card 18 If you were drawn to this card, call 09044 700 276

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A groom in a gown!



My fella dressed up for a charity run – on our big day

By Sami Richards, 22, from Telford

I've found the one,' my partner said excitedly on the phone. 'It's pure white, with lace detailing on the bodice. Plus it fits like a glove – perfect for our big day.' 'Sounds gorgeous,' I replied, trying to hold back laughter. 'You're going to look stunning.' And when I discovered it was only £22, even better. I could just about picture it. The long flowing chiffon,



Even his mates wore frocks!

Danny's hairy chest stretching the corset...

You see, it wasn't just me who was wearing white on our wedding day.

My gruff groom was donning a bridal gown, too!

It all started when my partner of three years Danny, 22, signed up to run the London Marathon in aid of Children with Cancer.

'I need to raise £2,500,' he fretted. 'I'll have to do something spectacular to get people to put their hands in their pockets.'

We thought of all of the usual fundraising ideas, but nothing appealed to Danny.

'It needs to be wacky,' he said.

'Why don't we link it to our wedding somehow?' I suggested.

We'd set the date for 21 February 2015 – two months before the marathon.

'Got it!' Danny grinned. 'Why don't I do a 5k run round our local park... On our wedding day... In a wedding dress.'

I looked at him, then burst into hysterics.

'Brilliant,' I chuckled. 'But promise me one thing.'

'What's that?' Danny asked. 'That you won't look better than me,' I teased.

As it's bad luck to see each

Wedding WONDERS

25-page special!



He looked stunning!

Danny, with his fellow runners

other before the ceremony, I wouldn't be able to cheer him on.

But Danny arranged for his best man – his older brother Ben – and 10 ushers to do the run with him.

Next he found his frock in a Barnardo's charity shop.

It was £40, but he got a discount when he explained what it was for.

Then he started telling people about his daring dash.

'I want to raise as much as possible,' he said, urging them to give generously.

Finally, the morning of the big day – and the big race – arrived.

While my mum Julie zipped me into my cream gown, it was funny to think that Danny's mates would be helping him into his white number.

And as my hair was being straightened and my make-up

perfected, Danny would be sweating his way around Telford Town Park.

At 12.30pm I headed to St Andrew's Church, where Danny was waiting for me at the altar.

Thankfully, he'd freshened up and looked dapper in a dark grey suit.

After saying our vows, we headed to a local hotel for our reception.

'How was it?' I asked Danny. 'Everyone was so supportive,' he said. 'But I didn't look half as good as you.'

What a charmer! The race collection meant he was well on the way to reaching his final target. It really had been the best day of our lives.

That night, he showed me photos of him in his gown on his camera phone.

And I had to admit, he did look a bit of *all white!*

He found it in a charity shop



Luckily he got changed for the wedding!

New beginnings

With my hubby Darren and our two children



My mum's led me to

of losing you, yet couldn't talk to you about it.

I felt so lonely.

So I logged on to an online chat room.

I noticed one user was from Lincoln, like me.

My name is Kirsty, I wrote. My mum has been diagnosed with breast cancer and I need to talk to someone.

A reply came straight away.

Hi. My name's Darren.

You won't believe this, but my mum has just been diagnosed with breast cancer too, he typed.

His mum was also at the same stage of treatment as you.

I couldn't believe the coincidence.

Finally I had someone who understood.

After talking online for two weeks, Darren and I decided to meet in person.

We'd mainly spoken about his mum Maureen and you.

But when we met, I soon realised we had so much more in common.

At the time I wasn't even thinking about a relationship.

But just six months later, in March 2008, he proposed – and I accepted.

A month later, you and Maureen were given the all clear.

I was over the moon.

You had both grown so close during your treatment.

We thought the battle was over and all went out for a meal to celebrate.

I remember watching you from across the table, laughing and talking away.

Things are finally back to normal, I thought.

Five months later, you started coughing.

We thought it was a delayed symptom of the radiotherapy.

Doctors had warned us that could happen.

One day the cough got so bad that you couldn't breathe.

I rushed to visit you in hospital and there was a sadness in your eyes.

As I sat by your bedside you said, 'I wish I'd taught you the names of all the different birds and plants when you were little.'

You knew then that it was more than a cough, didn't you, Mum?

The next day you left me a voicemail.

'Kirsty, can you and Darren come over. I'm out of hospital but I have some news,' you said.

There was something in your voice.

I knew immediately.

The cancer had returned.

As we pulled into your street, I jumped out of the car before it had stopped.

I just wanted to get to you as soon as possible.

'It's back, isn't it?' I asked.

'Yes,' you replied.

My blood ran cold.

'Where?' I asked, nervously.

I thought you were going to say the other breast.

But you explained how it had silently spread, settling in your spleen, eyes, brain, liver and lungs.

I didn't understand.

The doctors had said all clear.

My whole world fell apart



She lost her battle just a week after my wedding

By Kirsty Summers, 27, from Lincoln

Dear Mum,

You were forever putting others first.

Growing up, we may not have always seen eye to eye.

We'd quarrel when I was a teenager, but I knew that you would do anything for me.

After telling me you had breast cancer, you offered me a cup of tea.

When you found the lump in June 2007, you quietly drove yourself to hospital to get it checked out.

You didn't tell a soul, didn't want to worry anyone.

Doctors told you that you

may have a cyst, or an infected milk duct.

But nobody mentioned the C word.

You asked me to come and get the results with you.

When a specialist called us in to his office, he launched into a speech about chemotherapy.

I stopped him.

'Are you saying Mum has cancer?' I asked.

When he nodded my whole world fell apart.

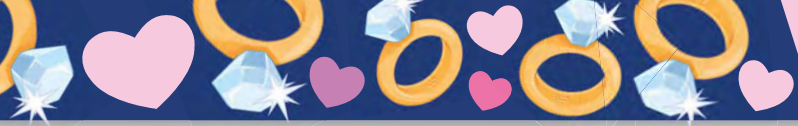
I remember you sitting there, staring silently ahead.

Then you comforted me as I cried.

As your treatment got underway, you were so brave.

Never complained or broke down.

I couldn't stand the thought



cancer to love



Darren and me met on a chat room

'How long have you got?' I wept.

'A matter of months,' you replied, holding me tightly.

I was only 21. I wasn't ready to lose you, Mum.

Darren and I had planned our wedding for May 2010 – almost two years away.

'We've got to bring the wedding forward,' I said to Darren.

There was no way I was going to walk down the aisle without you there.

Friends and family rallied around and we arranged the whole wedding in four weeks.

The cancer had returned

I pictured you laughing at the speeches and dancing at the reception.

Only, by 5 October 2008, your condition had deteriorated.

On our special day you were in a wheelchair, hooked up to an oxygen tank.

We'd given you a notepad for writing down what you wanted to say, as you could barely speak.

Sitting next to me at dinner that day, you managed to muster the strength to whisper something to me.

'You look like a princess,' you said, your eyes lighting up.



My amazing mum was hanging on

I'm so glad she lived to see our big day

A few hours later you had to go home, you were exhausted.

I never told you this, but once you'd left I locked myself in the present room and wept.

Everyone had been saying that you were living to see me walk down the aisle.

It was true, as just eight days later you passed away at home with the family by your side.

I was devastated.

But so grateful for all the memories we made on my wedding day.

I was overjoyed seeing you there, smiling, as I said 'I do.'

I'm a mother as well now.

Jack was born the year

after you died.

He's 5 and his sister Isabelle is 2.

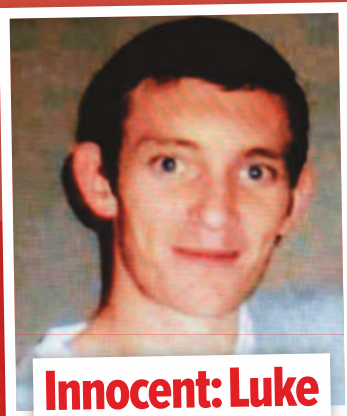
They'd love you, and I tell them about you all the time.

I'm sorry you aren't here to see them grow, but don't worry about me.

Being a mummy doesn't scare me.

Because you set such an incredible example.

**All my love,
Kirsty xx**



Innocent: Luke

BRANDED A RAPIST AND BEATEN TO DEATH



A malicious lie led to my brother's brutal murder

By Emma Fordham, 26, from Upminster, Essex

It's funny, the things you remember about people. I was 8 when my brother Luke was born. He was so tiny, cute – adorable! But with eight of us kids, it was hard to stand out. So you know what we all remember about Luke? His toddler tantrums! 'Snotty little Luke,' we teased. And the nickname stuck. Luke would laugh along, though. And he was the proudest uncle when me and my hubby Antony had baby Harry in September 2010.

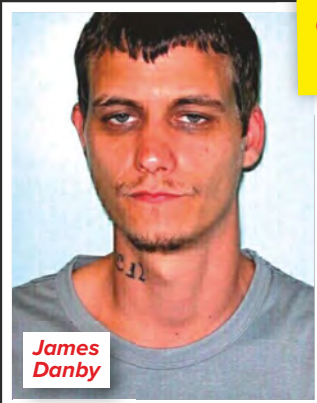
Then Luke met a girl. And a few months later... 'We're having a baby, too!' he gabbled, excited... When their son arrived, Luke was just 17. But he was a doting dad, even decided to train as a hairdresser so he could provide for his family. By May 2012, he'd started applying for courses. Meanwhile, I was seven months pregnant with my daughter and making Harry's dinner when the phone rang. It was our brother Scott.

'He's been murdered!' he screamed, hysterical. 'Who?' I gasped, as Scott's girlfriend took the phone. 'Luke,' she wept. With that, I collapsed, sobbing. How? Why? The whole family gathered round at Mum's, distraught. Police explained a woman had called, reporting a man named Luke had been murdered and dumped in an isolated stream...

At the spot in Woodford Green, 10 miles from Luke's home in Romford, they'd found a lad's beaten, unrecognisable body. But Luke's driving licence was in his pocket.

'Who did this?' we sobbed. At just 18, he'd never caused any trouble. Who'd attack him? 'When Luke was 16, he was accused of rape,' Mum said. 'What?' we gasped. Mum explained he'd had sex with a local girl. She'd told her mum that she'd slept with a boy she hadn't wanted to. 'Her mother called the police,' Mum explained. 'Luke denied everything.' But when the girl was questioned, she'd confirmed Luke hadn't raped her. 'Luke never told a soul,' Mum said. 'But now the police say he was murdered because of the rape claim. It makes no sense!'

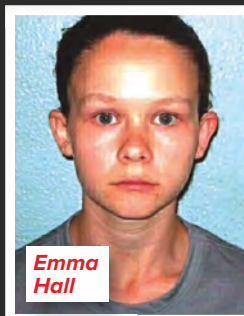
He'd never caused any trouble



James Danby

'A dangerous individual'

The judge said, 'James Danby is a dangerous individual who manipulated others in the dock to support him in these dreadful events. He has shown no sign of remorse.' And one police officer told the press, 'There is only one word you can use to describe James Danby – psychopath.'



Emma Hall



Tony O'Toole

Heartbreaking

All I have left now are memories of my little brother

At his funeral



He planned to return, cut off Luke's hands and head, then remove his teeth, to stop him being identified.

Sickened, Hall tipped off the police.

So when those monsters returned with pliers and knives, police were waiting.

Afterwards, Mary admitted to officers that she'd lied about Luke raping her.

'How could she?' I raged. 'She should be arrested, too!'

Yet as she'd never made an official false rape claim, she'd committed no crime.

Finally, Hall, Danby and O'Toole were all convicted of murder and perverting the course of justice.

Emma Hall and James Danby were also convicted of causing GBH with intent, while Tony O'Toole and Danby were also convicted of conspiracy to pervert the course of justice.

They got life – Danby with a minimum of 25 years and O'Toole 17 years.

Hall got a minimum of 15 years, increased to 17 on appeal.

Another housemate, Billy Duggan, 21, helped the gang clean up the house, and got a two-year suspended sentence for perverting the course of justice and conspiracy to pervert the course of justice.

As for Mary?

The police commended her 'bravery' for testifying.

I didn't agree.

Danby and his mates were responsible for killing Luke.

But it was Mary's wicked lie that started it all.

She pointed the finger at Luke, and now he's dead, taken from us in the most sickening way.

That's something I can never, ever forgive.

Yet all police could tell us was four people had been charged with his murder.

Then, eight weeks on, Luke's girlfriend had news.

'I'm pregnant – with Luke's daughter,' she said. 'He always wanted a little girl...'

It was bittersweet.

Luke's funeral was on my own due date. I still went.

We had a horse-drawn carriage, released doves, and played the song *He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother* by the Hollies.

Four days later, 7 August 2012, I delivered Georgia.

She gave me such strength.

So did Luke's daughter, born four months on.

Then in January 2013 came the trial, at the Old Bailey.

James Danby, 27, Tony O'Toole, 30, and Emma Hall, 21, all denied murder, and other assorted charges.

And we heard the awful truth about Luke's death...

It turned out Luke had moved into a council property with six other bedsits.

He'd no idea Mary, the girl

he'd been accused of raping two years before, was visiting Emma Hall, a resident.

Seeing Luke in the building, Mary pointed him out to Hall, and said he'd once raped her...

Enraged, Hall vowed to 'f***ing kill him'.

Then she gathered together the men who lived in the building, and the gang vowed a vicious revenge...

James Danby led the violence, screaming that Luke was a rapist.

Horrificed, Luke denied it.

To be sure, Danby forced Luke to pose for a photo.

Danby showed it to Mary, who lied yet again.

She said Luke was her rapist.

Another resident at the bedsit was convinced the rape claim wasn't true.

As Danby roared abuse and threats at Luke, this man begged Mary to tell the truth.

But Mary had insisted

otherwise...

Fired up, Danby, Hall, and O'Toole savagely punched, kicked and stamped on poor, petrified Luke – for two hours.

The house was soon splashed with his blood.

Then the gang bundled Luke into a car, and Emma Hall drove them to Woodford Green.

Every bone in his face had been broken.

Then, beside a remote stream, they 'finished him off'.

Danby and O'Toole jumped on Luke's head over 20 times.

They left him in the water, half covered with a mattress.

'I killed him, Treacle,' Danby crowed to Hall.

'He said... His head burst like a marshmallow and brains spurted everywhere,' Hall said.

Back home, they cleaned the house, burned Danby's clothes.

Danby then bragged he'd been promoted to the 'A-team' of crime.

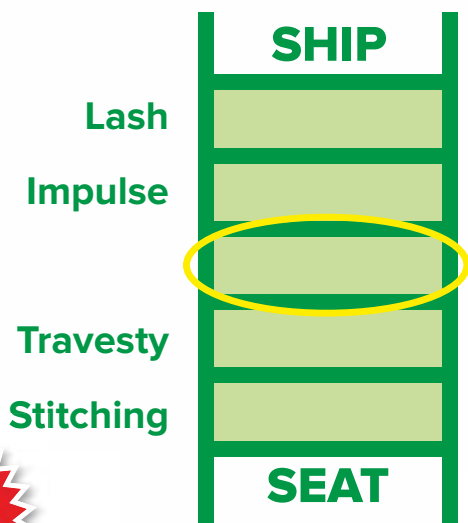
But he wasn't finished yet.

They jumped on his head 20 times

Win £50!

LADDERWORD

Which famous music duo first met when they were at Bushey Meads School in Hertfordshire? To find out, solve the puzzle! Fill in each step with a new word, changing one letter at a time as you climb down the ladder. The circled rung will reveal the prize word. See **HOW TO ENTER**, below.



Puzzle 11

£25

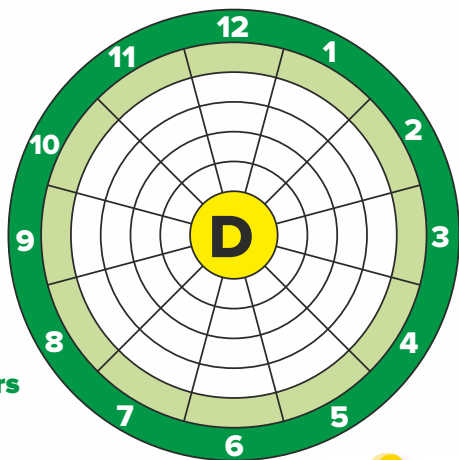
Your answer:

You can do it!

CLOCKWORD

Which London-born actress found fame playing Marissa Cooper in The O.C.? The solutions from 1 to 12 are all six-letter words ending with the letter D in the centre. Moving clockwise from 1, the letters in the outer circle will reveal the prize answer. See **HOW TO ENTER**, below.

- 1 System
- 2 Habituated
- 3 Planted
- 4 Shut
- 5 Loathing
- 6 Dumbfounded
- 7 Excluded
- 8 United
- 9 Strained
- 10 Tantalized
- 11 Followed orders
- 12 Tacked



Puzzle 12

£25

Your answer:

Have a go!

TO ENTER Turn to page 73 for details

chat

True-life



Tummy tuck op left me

with a hole in my stomach

By Barbara Thomson, 50, from Coventry

Stood at my wardrobe, I was stumped.

Not because I had nothing to wear...

Quite the opposite.

Everything was brand new, and a size 16.

The smallest I'd ever worn!

But what was the point wearing a slinky dress when I knew what I looked like underneath?

It was December 2009 and I'd lost 10st, thanks to a gastric band.

After years of binge-eating, I'd ballooned to 24st...

Never able to stick to a diet, I'd resorted to surgery after finding out I had diabetes.

'We can give you the op on the NHS,' the doc had told me.

So I'd gone under the knife, and afterwards, not able to eat the stodgy foods I loved, I'd

dropped 2st in two months.

And my weight kept falling. Now, 16 months on, I was down to 14st 7lb. Plus, my diabetes was gone.

To start with, I'd felt fab.

Now I'd shifted the lot, I felt anything but. Because under my new clothes were rolls of saggy skin.

They hung from my body like sheets of raw dough.

After my weight-loss, I felt as deflated as I looked.

'I look hideous!' I cried to my hubby Stuart, 50.

'If you're that bothered, why don't you see the doctor?' he suggested.

So I went to my GP.

'I can't promise you anything, but I'll refer you to a surgeon,' he said.

Fingers crossed.

'I'd suggest a total body lift,' a surgeon at Selly Oak Hospital, Birmingham, said later.

They'd pull down the apron of saggy skin at the front and hoist it up at the back.

Even better, I'd have the op on the NHS.

'Amazing!' I gasped.

'But with surgery, there are risks,' the doc said.

The wound could become infected, I could react to the anaesthetic, get a blood clot...

'I understand,' I nodded.

Stuart worried, but was supportive. He knew how much it meant to me.

I was sure it'd be fine.

Anything was better than looking the way I did.

'I'm going to have a flat stomach for the first time!' I beamed to Stuart.

The date for my op, 31 January 2010, soon came.

'See you when you wake up,' Stuart said.

Under my clothes were rolls of skin



I'd needed to lose weight

Lifebreaking bid for the perfect bod

Excited, I was wheeled into surgery for the 10-hour op.

And when I came round...

'I look like a mummy,' I giggled at my bandages.

I felt sore, but that was to be expected.

Next day, a nurse came to change my dressing.

'Doctor, look at this!' she shouted.

I didn't like the sound of that.

'What's wrong?' I asked.

'You've got wound dehiscence,' the doctor said. 'It means the wound has opened up. We'll use strips to hold it together so it can heal better.'

They also put me on strong antibiotics.

But it was three days before I took a peek when my dressing was being changed.

'Oh, my God!' I gasped.

My skin had turned black, started to die.

I was taken to theatre to have the dead tissue cut away.

By now, I had a hole in my stomach you could fit a fist in.

Surgeons fitted a vacuum to



The op left me like this

I had the dead tissue cut away

suck the pus out of my wound.

They thought it had been caused because of complications due to me having had a hysterectomy.

I lay next to a bag of my rotting insides, devastated.

'I wish I'd never had the op!' I sobbed to Stuart.

For the next month in hospital, that gadget was attached to me, sucking out rotten flesh.

I had to lie flat to avoid putting pressure on my wound.

Finally, after a month attached to the pump, I was allowed to go home.

I was still on the vac for the next three months. Couldn't wash or dress myself.

A district nurse, Jill, came to visit me every day with a 'hospital at home' nurse, Caroline. They'd check my vac and clean the wound.

Stuart had to do it in between their visits.

The stench was awful.

But Stuart didn't complain once – kept me smiling, too.

'Thanks, Matron,' I grinned, as he brought me a cuppa.

Life was on hold as the vac therapy helped me heal.

Think about the risks...

It took five months for the hole to close. But, in May 2010, the vacuum was removed.

It was amazing to have my life back. Even nipping out to the supermarket felt like a treat after being housebound for so long.

The wounds have healed but I've been left with horrible scars.

I also now have arthritis in my spine, caused by the surgery, and I'm registered disabled.

What happened is no-one's fault. The surgeon was fantastic and Selly Oak were brilliant.

I was warned of the risks, I just thought it wouldn't happen to me.

So now I'm warning you.

Think very carefully about going under the knife.

● Sadly, Barbara Thomson passed away after telling her story. This article has been reprinted with the permission of her husband Stuart.

Stuart and Barbara



Stuart says:

'Last May, Barbara kept complaining about pains in her abdomen. At hospital she underwent a CT scan which showed her bowel was twisted, blocking the flow of blood, and she had to be operated on. Tragically, she never came round from surgery, and I was by her side when her life support was turned off on 8 May 2014. I miss her every day.'

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I took control of my diet and lost a whopping 9st

By Joanne Williamson, 38, from North Shields

My eyes blinked open, the world came swimming back into view. I was face down on the concrete in my garden, my face sticky. *Oh, my God – blood...* 'Mummy, please wake up,' a little voice said. It was my 10-year-old son, Lewis...

It was a hot day in July 2010. I'd waved Lewis and his dad Michael off to the shops before sitting in the garden. Last thing I remembered was getting up to get myself another cuppa – then nothing.

Now I looked up from where I lay to see Lewis and Michael, 50, peering down at me.

I must have passed out. 'I'll call an ambulance,' Michael said, frantic.

At North Tyneside General Hospital I was treated for my cuts and grazes.

The doctors diagnosed heat exhaustion, probably caused by being overweight. I was mortified.

At 22st and a size 30, I knew I was big. Massive, even.

But so big I'd passed out?

My weight hadn't affected my health before.

'I can't believe it,' I mumbled, when the doc left me and Michael alone. 'Sorry for giving you a scare.'

But he was upset – and I knew I had to lose weight.

Shedding the pounds was easier said than done, though.

Always on the porky side, I'd been dieting since I was 14.

But, before long, I'd go back



I'd crept up to a size 30!



Now I'm a trim size 14

Fat's not the way to live my life!

to my usual crisps and pastries, fried food for tea.

When I was pregnant with my daughter Hayley-Marie, 15, I'd used my pregnancy as an excuse to stuff my face.

It was the same when I was carrying Lewis.

For years, Michael had seen how being big had affected me.

He'd watched me cancel on mates, because I was ashamed to go out. How I'd packed in my job as a machinist.

I got so frightened about leaving the house, I'd been diagnosed with agoraphobia.

All because I was ashamed of being fat.

The doctor said if I could lose

a few stone, he'd give me appetite suppressants to help me shed a bit more.

'I can't do it!' I'd sob.

But this was the wake-up call I needed.

'It won't happen again,' I promised Michael.

'You're not alone, we'll do it together,' he replied.

True to his word, Michael looked up the Weight Watchers diet online and kept a note of everything I was eating.

I chucked all the pastries and crisps out of the cupboard and filled the fridge with fish and

lean meat, vegetables and fruit.

I even hired a treadmill!

If I can't go to the gym, it can come to me, I thought.

No more excuses. I stuck to my diet, but it was tough. I missed my old fried faves.

But, in the first week, I lost 11lb. Then 7lb the next.

It felt amazing!

Week by week and month by month, more weight came off.

When I'd lost 4st, I felt confident enough to go outside – but then I had a wobble.

'We have to go home,' I said to Michael, feeling panicky as soon as we got to town.

But, the next weekend, I went out again – and, this time, I even went into a shop and bought a pair of size-18 jeans.

Six sizes down!

'You look great, love,' Michael said, as I

paraded around. It meant the world to see how proud he was of me.

And you know what? I was the proudest of all!

I kept on with my diet and exercise, getting smaller and healthier as the weeks went on.

Now I weigh in at

12st 5lb and I'm a size 14.

But what's better than my new body? I've got my life back.

In 2012, I applied for

another machinist job – and I got it.

I cycle 20 minutes to and from work every day, go out with my friends and enjoy walks with Michael and the kids.

Crazy as it sounds, I'm glad that I collapsed that day.

It made me realise I could lose my precious partner and kids if I didn't sort myself out.

What a journey it's been.

I lost 9½st – and found myself!

I'm not scared to leave the house now

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Chat True-life

A special note the daughter



Sidonie's message in a bottle gave me comfort

By Mimi Fery, 58, from Manhattan, New York

Sitting in a restaurant with my daughter, I pretended to be disappointed.

'I can't believe you didn't get me a present,' I teased.

It was January 2009 – my 54th birthday – and Sidonie and I were out for dinner.

She'd given me a beautiful hand-made card that morning.

But that was it.

Just then, a waiter walked past.

'Do you have a piece of paper?' she asked him.

He handed her a pad and pen and Sidonie, then 17, started scribbling.

Minutes later, she handed it to me.

It was a gorgeous poem about me.

'It's beautiful,' I said, tearfully. 'Perfect!'

Sidonie was my only daughter – we were so close.

Her dad and I split up when she was 3, so it was just the two of us.

Bubbly, sensitive, creative and independent, Sidonie thrived.

Then, aged 10, she became obsessed with the

cult comedy classic, *Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure*, starring Keanu Reeves.

She'd watch the film over and over.

'Not this again,' I'd laugh.

'Most excellent!' she'd joke, mimicking one of the film's

classic quotes.

Like Bill and Ted, Sidonie knew how to relax and enjoy herself. And she was smart and kind, too.

Now, I gave her a hug for her thoughtful gift.

A few months later, aged 18, we discussed

Sidonie moving schools, as she was

**My girl
had fallen
to her death**

unhappy where she was and she was being bullied.

We found a great international school in Lausanne, Switzerland.

Sidonie spoke French and Farsi, loved to travel and enjoy new experiences.

I knew she'd come back to see me lots so, in January 2010, she flew off.

I missed her terribly, but we spoke most weeks, and Sidonie settled in well.

At the beginning of April, Sidonie came home for a visit – and it was wonderful to see my girl again.

After a short stay, she headed back to school again.

Still, we could always chat on the phone and we had a good natter on 21 April.

But, two days later, I got a phone call from the school...

'There's been an accident,' the headmaster said. 'We've found two bodies at the bottom of a cliff – Sidonie is one of them.'

My whole world fell apart.

How could my precious girl be dead?

In a daze, I flew to Switzerland to bring Sidonie's body home.

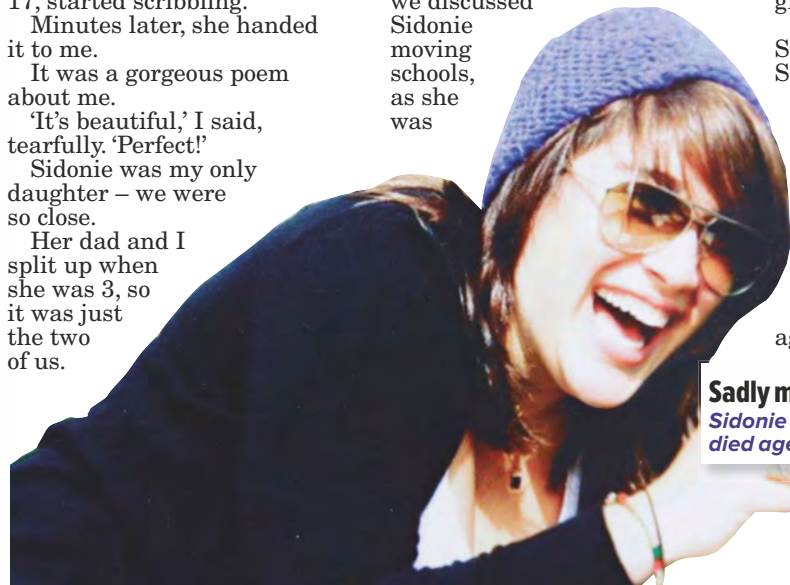
I learnt she'd been on a picnic with friends.

Her friends told me they'd been singing Jay-Z and Mr Hudson's *Forever Young*, before Sidonie and a friend had wandered off to another part of the cliff.

Somehow, my precious girl had fallen to her death, aged just 18. Devastating.

I held a beautiful service for her in New York, and hundreds of

**Sadly missed
Sidonie tragically
died aged just 18**



An excellent last gift...

e from er I lost



Her note
quoted
Bill & Ted

people came along to pay their respects.

Afterwards, my life felt so painfully empty without Sidonie.

I missed her more than words could say.

I looked through the lovely hand-made presents she'd given me over the years, talked to her photo...

Yet I knew that I had to carry on somehow.

Until one day, on 13 December 2012.

I was having a bad day, and just couldn't seem to stop crying.

I wanted so badly to see my Sidonie again.

So I changed the screen saver on my phone to a smiling picture of my girl, aged 10 – it made me feel closer to her to see her happy little face.

Later that day, I picked up a message on my answerphone from a man named Brian.

'We found a message in a bottle while we were in

Patchogue, Long Island,' the man said.

He'd said he'd been helping clear up in the village near New York, after Hurricane Sandy. The massive Atlantic hurricane had caused widespread damage.

He went on to say that he and a colleague had stumbled across the bottle as they worked...

And inside it was a note saying, *Be excellent to yourself dude!* and my phone number.

I broke down in tears.

It was a quote from *Bill &*

Ted's Excellent Adventure.

And, immediately, I knew that Sidonie had written it.

I called Brian straight back.

I sobbed as I told him about Sidonie, how she'd loved Bill and Ted.

Then, I called my friend Katia. She lived in Long Island. Me and Sidonie used to visit her and her daughters, Claire and Georgia, all the time.

'When we were 10, we put notes in bottles and threw them into the sea,' Claire said.

That was 13 years ago...

And now I'd got one of my daughter's messages.

*I still miss
her every day*

It made
me feel
closer
to her

The next day, I went to Patchogue, met Brian and his colleague Garrett who'd found the bottle.

Seeing Sidonie's writing, I broke down. But, this time, I was crying happy tears.

It was as if Sidonie was saying to me, 'Mom, I'm here.'

So reassuring.

Unbelievably, in July 2013, Patchogue held a wonderful ceremony for Sidonie, even put up a picture of her where they'd found her bottle.

I miss my beautiful daughter every day, but I know she's safe and happy, wherever she is.

Her message in a bottle was exactly what I needed.

And the best hand-made gift I could ever have asked for.

Memory Lane



Starstruck!

I had the pleasure of meeting the charming Craig Revel Horwood at a book signing on a Strictly Come Dancing Cruise. Fabulous, darling!

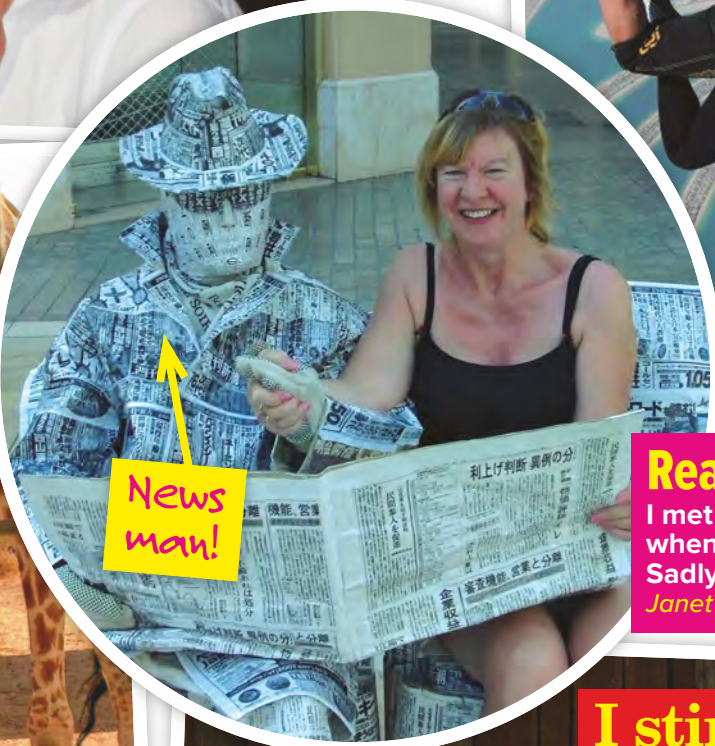
Carol Winch, Sevenoaks

This snap of The Palm in Dubai was taken on my first go at skydiving. Scary, but the view was amazing!

Carys McCauley, London



Aiming high!

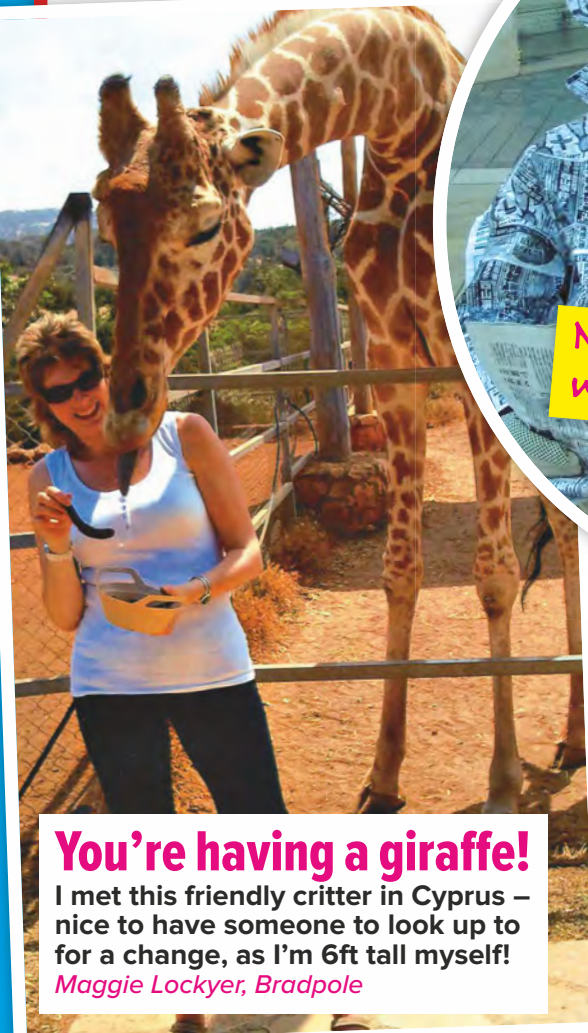


News man!

Read all about it...

I met the local newsreader when I went to Malaga. Sadly he wasn't very chatty!

Janet Murphy, York



You're having a giraffe!

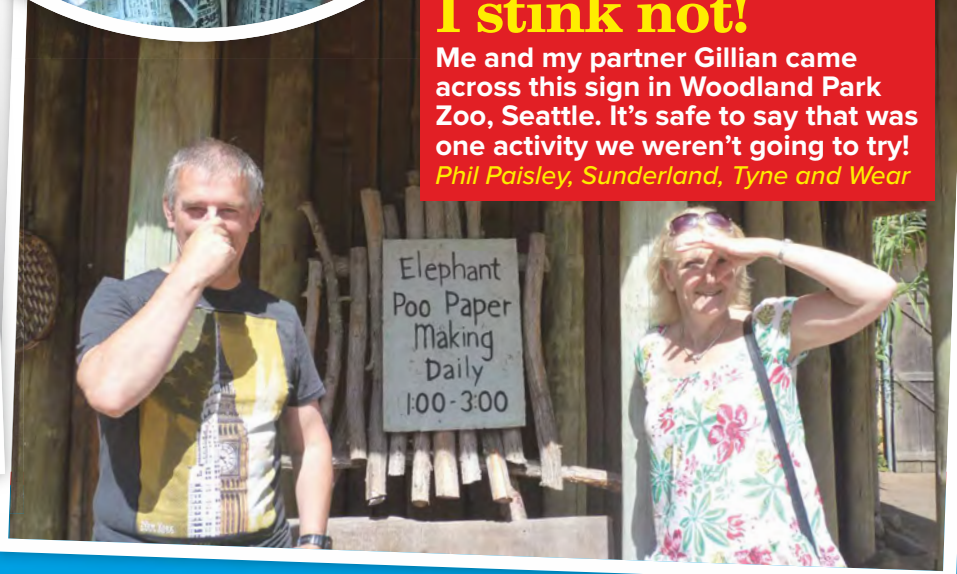
I met this friendly critter in Cyprus – nice to have someone to look up to for a change, as I'm 6ft tall myself!

Maggie Lockyer, Bradpole

I stink not!

Me and my partner Gillian came across this sign in Woodland Park Zoo, Seattle. It's safe to say that was one activity we weren't going to try!

Phil Paisley, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear



**Hola
senorita!**

My sister got married in Mexico so we had a themed hen do!
Roxann Dixon, Rugby

The way we were...

This snap of my aunt Olive and me brings back happy memories. It was taken on her wedding day over 60 years ago and I had the honour of being her bridesmaid.

Sylvia Gray, Acklam, Middlesbrough

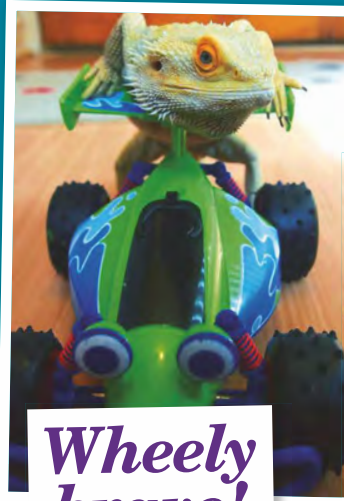
This is me on my 21st birthday dressed as Xena Warrior Princess. And just check out my amazing 'turntable' birthday cake that my mum had specially made for me!

Lauren Byrne, via email

**It's a piece
of cake!**

POTTY PETS

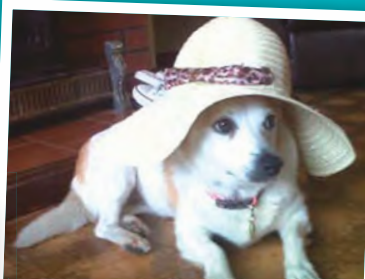
They're so cute!



**Wheely
brave!**

Brian, my bearded dragon, is a real daredevil – look at him go!

*Clare Walters,
Penygraig*



Furry cool

Lovely Holly decided to take a break from the heat one summer – and doesn't she look marvellous in her sunhat?

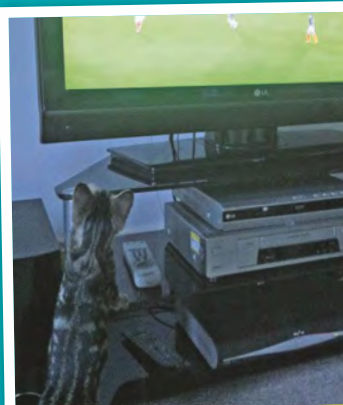
*Majella McClay,
Raphoe, Co Donegal*



Double act

My guinea pig Daphne loves nothing more than giving herself little kisses in the mirror – bless!

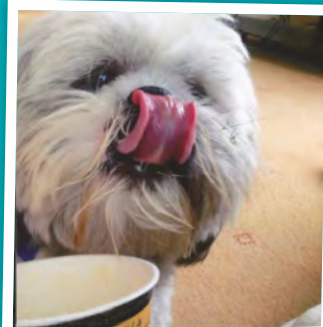
*Caroline Laytham,
St Helens*



Cat's a goal!

My gorgeous kitten Mia never misses a chance to watch footy on the telly!

*Hayley Green,
Bournemouth*



Doggy diet

Mmmm! My pooch Hugo couldn't gobble up his pud fast enough!

*Kerry Blewitt,
Birmingham*

WE'RE ON THE MEND

These readers are improving after their surgery...

I'm smiles better now...



I finally decided to let

doctors fix my lopsided face

By Jayella King, 19, Tredegar

Walking down the school corridor, I braced myself. Sure enough... 'Candlewax face!'

smirked a boy as I passed. That was a new one.

See, born with facial palsy, I'd heard a lot of insults in my time.

It meant the muscles and nerves in the right side of my face didn't work. So I could only close my left eye, and I could only smile with the left side of my mouth.

A full-on, beaming grin was an impossible dream.

Kids in the playground would mimic me by twisting their faces into an ugly grimace.

So cruel.

Facial palsy

This is a weakness of the facial muscles resulting from damage to the facial nerve. When a facial nerve isn't working, the muscles in the face don't receive the signals they need to function properly, which results in paralysis. Facial palsy can be temporary or permanent.

When I was 7, a teacher found me crying my eyes out. 'They're so mean,' I sobbed. She called my mum Lian, now 42, but there was nothing much anyone could do. 'Just ignore them, love,' said Mum.

Luckily, my sister Abbie went to my school. A year older than me, she'd give the kids a telling off.

But then the teasing would start again.

Aged 10, Mum sat me down. 'There's an operation you can have,' she told me.

But I was defiant. 'No,' I replied. 'This is my face. If other people can't deal with it, that's their problem.'

I learned to cope.

I never had an issue with speaking but I struggled to brush my teeth, and could only eat on the left side of my mouth.

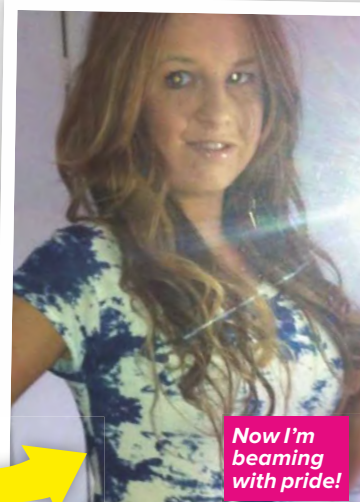
And as I grew up, it made putting on make-up tricky, but I grew so adept at it I didn't even need to look in a mirror!

When I discovered a passion for dancing, worries about my face took a backseat. Street dance, hip hop, contemporary, I loved them all!

When I finished school, I started a Performing Arts course. When I was dancing, I wasn't thinking about how my



I'd always had a wonky grin



Now I'm beaming with pride!

face looked.

But on a night out with my friends, I spun round on the dance floor and caught a glimpse of someone behind me.

When I realised he was mocking my lopsided face, my heart sank.

Will I always be judged because of my wonky face?

And what if it stopped me from becoming a professional dancer?

So I had a long think about it, and...

'I want a real smile,' I told Mum.

My surgery was scheduled for April 2011, just days before my 17th birthday.

There were risks.

'There's a small chance your whole face might be paralysed afterwards,' the surgeon said.

During a seven-hour op,

surgeons transplanted muscle from my armpit and a nerve from my leg into my face.

I remember the bandages coming off. I took a deep breath, looked in the mirror...

Both sides of my lips were raised in a smile at last!

I've been smiling ever since.

I had further surgery in February 2012 and my confidence soared.

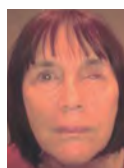
Now, I'm finally training to be a professional dancer.

I've got scars from my op that run from behind my ear to my jaw, from my knee to my ankle, and under my arm, but they're scars I'm proud of.

They remind me that most people take smiling for granted but, to me, it's a gift.

I could only smile with the left side of my mouth

A contact lens made me blind!



My cornea was eaten by a painful fungus...

By June Scott, 63, from Chester-le-Street

Putting my disposable contact lens into my left eye, I blinked until it was in the right place.

Only it felt odd. Like I'd a hair in my eye.

I'd worn glasses since I was 8, but my prescription was so strong, I could only ever get horrible glasses.

So, when I was 18, I started wearing contacts, alternating between them and my specs.

But now, in March 2012, it felt like the lens was scratching my eye.

'It's so painful,' I winced to my

hubby William, 62.

Frustrated, I took it out and returned them to my optician, as I'd spotted a brown mark on the lens.

Armed with a new batch, I thought nothing more of it, and packed the lot as William and I flew to our winter holiday home in Alicante, Spain, in October 2012.

A few days on, I decided to wear my contacts.

Only, after a few minutes, that uncomfy feeling returned.

My left eye was streaming and stung, as if I'd just peeled onions.

William hated seeing me in pain, took me to hospital.

There, I was given drops and sent home. But

days later, at 2am, I woke up in agony.

'It feels like my eye is burning,' I cried in pain.

At hospital, I was hooked up to an antibiotic drip, needed the medicine pumped through me from 8am-5pm each day for three weeks.

Even so, the sight in my left eye began to deteriorate and the pain was



I hope to get a glass eye soon



I've lost my confidence

Docs had to remove my eye

unbearable.

But why?

'A fungal infection called fusarium has attacked your eye,' a doc explained. 'It's eating away at your cornea.'

It's what? Disgusting!

Turned out, it was from my contact lens.

As doctors battled to save my vision, I had three ops to try and flush out the infection.

But although I was finally discharged in late December, there was devastating news...

'We'll need to remove your left eye,' a doc said.

As we were still in Spain, we'd paid for private tests and prescriptions.

Now, they said that if they didn't remove my eye, the infection would spread.

All this from a contact lens.

'I'll look like something from a horror movie,' I sobbed to William.

But I had no choice. So, on 4

January 2013, I went to Clinico Hospital in San Juan.

There, I had a three-and-a-half-hour operation to remove my left eye.

'It was a success,' the surgeon said afterwards.

But when I peeled the

bandage off three days later, I recoiled in horror.

My eye socket and lid were completely sunken.

'No!' I gasped, horrified.

I needed more antibiotics, too.

I was glad to be rid of the pain, but my life had changed.

I can't drive any more. If people stand on my left side, I don't see them.

Slowly, I've adjusted to having only one working eye.

I'm due to have a glass eye fitted, which will hopefully boost my confidence.

In the meantime, I'm glad I have the love and support of William and my family.

I was hooked up to an antibiotic drip

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I entered my pet skunk into a beauty pageant...

By Sandra Vaughan, 43, from Chesterfield

Soft, shiny, voluminous... I'd really excelled with this bounce!

As a hairdresser, I was a pro at blowdrying. But this wasn't a usual client – it was my pet skunk, Pepe Le Pew!

With his black fur, white stripe and fluffy tail, he was so scrumptious!

I got him shortly after I'd looked after my friend Joe's skunk, Effy.

I was animal mad. I had a small zoo in my back garden and was the proud owner of two racoons, four meerkats, two prairie dogs, a bearded dragon, two hedgehogs, a skinny pig, a tarantula, a guinea pig – as well as a dog called Charlie!

So Joe knew I'd be up to the job!

I guess you'd think she'd kick up a stink, but, after 10 minutes, Effy was cuddling up to me on the sofa.

'I want one!' I told my daughter Emma, 21.

Five weeks later, I found a specialist breeder, paid £450 and the black-and-white Pepe Le Pew was mine!



Pepe loves a good pamper

Show and SMELL!

Skunks have a reputation of being stinky, but they only let off their nasty gas when they get attacked or scared.

It happened to Effy once when she got attacked by a dog.

The smell – a gut-churning pungent mix of garlic, onion and acid – hung about for months and months!

But if they're looked after properly, they won't spray.

Cuddly and affectionate, I'm never short of comments when I take Pepe out on his lead.

'He's really cute,' kids coo over him.

And that got me thinking... we should do a skunk show!

I posted the idea on Facebook.

Turned out, there was already an Exotic Pet Awareness Day in Birmingham.

So I contacted the organiser, Ken Williams, and with his help, we included a section especially for skunks.

On 3 August 2013, they held

a skunk beauty pageant.

There were eight categories including best tail, best skunk and best fancy-dress outfit.

Pepe was prepped to perfection.

And, on the day, 28 skunks stepped up to strut their stuff and puff up their fluff, while the judges went over them with a fine-tooth comb.

The fancy-dress was the real showstopper.

Me and Joe entered Pepe and Effy as Wayne and Coleen Rooney in England shirts – Pepe's in white and Effy's in red.

Competition was stiff, though, and they lost out to Paddy, an Irish skunk who came dressed as a priest.

'He's been s-praying for this moment all his life!' his owner Michelle joked.

In the end, Pepe and Effy didn't win any categories.

But it didn't matter. The show had been a success and Pepe had been the inspiration.

He can be proud – and one day, perhaps we'll get our furry-tail ending!

Skunks stepped up to strut their stuff

Their outfits were the bees knees!



Pawfect poser!

The judges were tough

A MUM AND DAD'S TWISTED PACT TO KILL THEIR KIDS

What made Cathie and Marc plan a horrific murder-suicide?

Over New Year, emergency services are always inundated with requests.

But on 1 January 2009, the services in Quebec received a chilling call...

Her speech slurred, Cathie Gauthier, 36, said her husband had killed himself – and their three children.

'He drugged us, and when I woke up, I was in my bed with my three kids,' she garbled.

Cathie said the night before,

as they watched TV, her husband Marc Laliberte, 46, served them poisoned drinks.

'It was a pact – my husband killed our three children,' she added, bluntly.

Police and ambulances rushed to the couple's white bungalow in Saguenay, Canada.

Cathie was now unconscious in the kitchen, bleeding from a slashed wrist.

Her husband lay dead on the bedroom floor, his wrist cut, too.

Joelle, 12, Marc-Ange, 7, and Louis-Philippe, 4, were lined up on the bed, their arms crossed over their chests.

As Cathie was hospitalised, officers found a letter signed by her and Marc.

It gave instructions for the family to be cremated, their ashes stored in one urn, 'so they could be together forever'.

Friends and family reeled with shock.

They told police the pair were depressed after years battling money problems.

Yet there'd been no signs of the impending catastrophe.

'They didn't seem unhappy,' Marc's brother Alain said.

He'd seen the family just four days earlier.

So what had happened?

Police found the pair moved to the area four months before, after Cathie felt 'psychologically and sexually harassed' by a former neighbour.

Marc had become an estate agent, Cathie a sales assistant.

But for years, they'd struggled financially, and in October, Marc went bankrupt, with debts of £53,900.

Then his mother died – and Marc lost his job. Soon after, Cathie was fired.

The couple grew desperate.

Police found emails to charities, begging for help.

My family is desperate and exhausted, Marc had written. There's only £236 left.

He signed off as: *A father who would give his life for those he loves.*

In hospital, Cathie told nurses that on New Year's Eve Marc had told her it was time for the family to die...

Cathie said she'd first felt suicidal in

the summer. She and Marc even discussed killing the kids then.

But Cathie said, this time, she'd objected to his plans.

Yet he'd drugged her and the kids regardless.

She'd woken in bed to find her right wrist slashed.

Trying to wake the children, but weak with blood loss, she hadn't realised they were dead.

Instead, icy cold, she'd had a bath. Then gone back to bed.

Waking hours later, she'd tried to rouse the children again.

When she couldn't, panic surged. So she'd phoned for an ambulance.

But the kids had died after drinking a toxic mixture of tranquillizers and anti-nausea medication, Marc from blood loss.

Cathie was arrested, charged with three counts of first-degree murder, and with assisting Marc to commit suicide.

Before her trial, she tried to kill herself, but failed.

In October 2009, in a Quebec court, Cathie denied all charges. Insisted she hadn't agreed with Marc's pact. But Prosecutor Sonia Rouleau said Cathie meticulously planned the murder-suicide with Marc, due to their financial trouble.

First they'd given the kids a gift-filled Christmas, though they couldn't afford it. Then...

'On 27 December, [Cathie]

**It was
time for
the family
to die**

**They'd been given
a cocktail of drugs**

**Cathie was
the only
survivor**

A chilling crime...



**Marc
Laliberte**



**Three young lives
cruelly cut short...**

Innocent victims

Louis-Philippe, Marc-Ange and Joelle were killed by their parents

bought double the normal quantity of a prescription tranquillizer that was later found in her children's blood,' Rouleau said. 'That drug and an over-the-counter anti-nausea drug caused the children's death.'

Just before the tragedy, Cathie had posted letters to her nearest and dearest...

You complain you don't have any money... But, given your size, you seem to eat very well, she'd written to her mother. No-one wants to help us, we have gone to sleep for eternity.

And to her boss, *Your cruelty plunged me into the deepest despair... I'll wait for you in Hell.*

Rouleau argued Cathie cut her own wrist, before taking pills and lying beside her kids.

However, Cathie said she'd never wanted to go through with Marc's plan, but was drugged and couldn't stop it.

She said she couldn't remember that much of it, but described how they'd struggled after Marc's mother died and he went bankrupt.

Marc became irritable.

Upset, Cathie had demanded a separation.

But he'd insisted if she left, he'd keep the kids.

Devastated, she'd stayed – but their love soured.

On 31 December 2008, Marc announced the family were going on a 'one-way trip and never coming back'.

She wept that she'd never have agreed to a murder-suicide pact, as she wanted her kids to live.

'They meant everything to me,' she cried.

Then she went on to describe that terrible night...

How Marc had handed out drugged drinks.

After, Louis-Philippe quickly fell asleep. Then Marc-Ange said his legs felt tingling, and nodded off.

Next thing Cathie remembered was waking in bed, her arms crossed over her chest – her wrist bleeding.

The children were in the same position beside her.

Defence psychiatrist Dr Marie-Frederique Allard explained Cathie suffered borderline personality disorder, which can cause impulsive behaviour and disassociation from reality.

That she probably suffered amnesia after writing the letters, triggered by trauma and the sleeping pills.

But, testifying for the prosecution, Dr Sylvain Faucher said Cathie had known just what she was doing.

He said Cathie kept changing her story due to 'an unbearable sense of guilt' at what she'd done.

In a unanimous decision, jurors convicted Cathie

Gauthier of the three counts of first-degree murder.

She wept as she was sentenced to life, with a minimum of 25 years.

Although Cathie appealed for a retrial, her request was denied by the Quebec Court of Appeal in July 2011.

In 2013, Canada's Supreme Court dismissed an appeal.

Cathie kept changing her story

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She just wanted to be loved



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Your stars!

Chat astrologer Patrick Arundell reads your month ahead



Aries

21 Mar - 20 April



You can burst into May determined to transform your finances. The trick is going to be to control your costs as much as boost your income. The Full Moon on the 4th lays down a marker but by the 18th you can feel clear of how to proceed. With Mercury, Mars and the Sun going face to face with Saturn this month, you will need patience when it comes to explaining your ideas to others, and frustrations are possible.

● Call 09058 171760 for your year ahead forecast.

Taurus

21 April - 21 May



The Sun and Mars urge you on early in May, and this could see you being more risk-taking than for some time. If you have been putting off any big change, this can be the month that you finally spring your plan into action. However, joint finances or even issues of intimacy in relationships could prove to be more challenging areas. You might need to compromise, but could do so through gritted teeth.

● Call 09058 171761 for your year ahead forecast.

Gemini

22 May - 21 June



The month begins with your ruler Mercury, along with Venus, in your sign. Use week one to dazzle people with your charm. However, if you try too hard to impress one person it may backfire, just be yourself. Your finances are boosted on the 8th when Venus glides into Cancer, but in love the 19th to the 26th could lead to a fated attraction or a business situation where strings will be attached.

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Cancer

22 June - 23 July



You can be in demand as this month begins, but the best way to handle this Cancer is to invest your time and energies in those people and situations which are most genuine. If there are any uncertainties in your ties with others you could fret about this. With Venus in your sign from the 8th, extra attention might come your way, and one person from the 19th can prove really mesmerising.

● Call 09058 171763 for your year ahead forecast.

Leo

24 July - 23 Aug



Combining ambition and attention to detail can see you do well as the month begins. Communications are going to be especially so this month, not just because Mercury goes into rewind from the 19th, but because strict Saturn forges planetary oppositions all this month. If you are set to travel, or have legal dealings, attention to detail will be vital because exacting conditions prevail.

● Call 09058 171764 for your year ahead forecast.

Virgo

24 Aug - 23 Sept



Someone larger than life can grab your attention in week one. You may find this person terrifically inspiring or it might turn out that they don't walk the talk. What can be more challenging this month is work and home life balance. The two might not sync up well and you need to work at dealing with expectations. If you are looking at moving home you need to consider all your options and not rush the outcome.

● Call 09058 171765 for your year ahead forecast.

Libra

24 Sept - 23 Oct



If you are keen on gardening, DIY or decorating, this can be a key month. If you are moving home, this could also be a powerful time with a sense of new beginnings. However, around group friendships, all may not be what they seem so take your time. This may be one of those months where every single decision that needs to be made comes under scrutiny from those in positions of authority.

● Call 09058 171766 for your year ahead forecast.

Scorpio

24 Oct - 22 Nov



A potential new personal relationship is under the astral microscope as the month kicks off, and one very promising conversation can leave you feeling heartened. In an ongoing tie, tensions over money could be very real this May. It would be easy to become frustrated and find yourselves at opposite ends of the settee. Keeping the lines of communication open will help you avoid this.

● Call 09058 171767 for your year ahead forecast.

Sagittarius

23 Nov - 21 Dec



Jupiter, your ruling planet, squares with the Sun early in May. This can give you ambitious ideas, especially around expanding your world, but the trick will be to ensure the finer points are all OK too. Your attention to detail could also help you transform practical matters. Energy may be muted this month if you overload yourself and clashing with others can also be draining. Agree to disagree where needed.

● Call 09058 171768 for your year ahead forecast.

Capricorn

22 Dec - 20 Jan



Your creative abilities can really bubble away, and with the Sun and Mars combining in the first 11 days of May, you could also show plenty of spark. However, Mercury is set to rewind from the 19th and this means your natural thoroughness is set to be even more important. Don't let a little detail slip by, for it could prove costly. Someone might also emerge this month with something of a hidden agenda.

● Call 09058 171769 for your year ahead forecast.

Aquarius

21 Jan - 19 Feb



The month begins with the chance to deepen your understanding about your emotional needs, and the more you do, the more you can steer your moves in the right direction. There is likely to be greater interaction with family members. The things that bind you together could seem ever more important. Socially, the moves of Mercury on the 1st, Mars on the 12th and the Sun on the 21st could uplift you.

● Call 09058 171770 for your year ahead forecast.

Pisces

20 Feb - 20 Mar



There are exciting possibilities for friendships as the Sun and Pluto combine in week one. Something you've worked tirelessly towards can come to fruition and give you a great deal of satisfaction. Venus also moves into an alluring location from the 8th and this could have a real impact on your romantic hopes. As Mercury rewinds from the 19th, be aware of crossed wires around a property or family matter.

● Call 09058 171771 for your year ahead forecast.

I knew it was time to cake a change!



A passion for baking was damaging my health...

By Lynne Gadd, 36, from Pontypridd

Is there any greater pleasure in life than licking cake batter off a wooden spoon?

Well, yes – scoffing the finished product!

Growing up, my mum Rose was a whizz in the kitchen.

And, aged 11, I'd stand at her side, the pair of us whipping up cakes, buns and biscuits.

Then we'd share the spoils with my dad Colin, brother Steven and sister Kim.

The difference

between us being that I didn't know when to stop eating.

As well as my sweet tooth, I'd pile my dinner plate high, so I grew into quite a tubby teen.

By the time I was 17, I was already a size 16, weighed about 13st.

And, at just 5ft 4in, those extra inches really showed.

In time, I grew up, fell in love and settled down with Jason, a trainee teacher.

When we married in July 1999, I somehow managed to squeeze into a size-14 frock.

I could hardly breathe, but at least the long sleeves hid my bingo wings!

It was after the wedding that my figure really went haywire.

Every night, I'd snack on crisps, bars of chocolate.

And I was always baking, just like Mum.

Muffins, tarts, little cupcakes...

Friends were impressed and,

when word got round about my culinary talents, folk would make requests for special occasions.

I loved it, but it didn't do my waistline any favours.

But for some reason, I didn't mind getting bigger.

Sadly, Mum passed away when I was just 30.

And it made me think about my own health.

Denial's a tricky thing though.

There was always an excuse not to diet.

Like when my son Alex arrived in December 2006, then Ben came along in November 2009.

I was too frantic keeping up with the boys to think about myself...

Besides, my baking was keeping me busier than ever.

I was always doing favours for friends or people who'd heard about me on the grapevine.

I could knock up a cake in any shape you could think of.

And they were delicious, too.

I should know, I'd sampled enough of them.

Well... *Quality control!*

No wonder I was now wearing a size 22.

Sometimes I'd grumble about my figure.

'You eat as much as me and you never put on weight!' I'd moan to beanpole Jason.

He'd suggest I join a slimming club, but...

'Pay good money for someone else to tell me I'm fat? No chance!' I scoffed.

It eventually took a tragedy to get me to sign up.

In March 2011, I found out I was

I didn't know when to stop eating

Lynne's diet

BEFORE:

Breakfast Cereal with full-fat milk

Lunch Two cheese and ham sandwiches on white bread, crisps

Snack Chocolate or cake

Dinner Two burgers with chips and beans or Chinese takeaway

Snack Crisps or a sandwich



AFTER:

Breakfast Brown toast, fruit

Lunch Chicken pasta with home-made tomato sauce and vegetables

Snack Apple

Dinner Jacket potato or tuna pasta with salad or veg

Snack Low-calorie crisps or a Curly Wurly



I still love baking



I hated my figure



I've lost over 6st!

His veggies ARE VAST!

My hubby's plants got a growth spurt

By Rita Puopolo, 68, from Cambridge

They say retirement is your reward after years of work. But my hubby Luca, 73, missed his busy job as a shoe shop manager.

'I've got so much time on my hands,' he complained, in 2012. 'I need something to do.'

So, he got himself an allotment.

We're a big Italian family and we love our fresh food.

Luca started to grow tomatoes and peppers. Even named his vegetable patch The Italian Job.

And he enjoyed growing grub so much, he put a greenhouse in our garden, too.

'I've brought you something,' my brother-in-law said in March 2013, handing Luca a packet of seeds.

They were courgettes – or as we call them in Italy, zucchini.

'I've never grown one of these before,' Luca smiled, delighted. So he planted the seeds.

Over the next two months, the courgettes grew and grew...



Luca loves gardening!

By early July, they were getting big. Bigger than the eight inches they usually grow to, anyway!

Luca measured them every day.

'They're having a serious growth spurt!' I laughed.

By August, they were huge!

'Rita! Come and look at this!'

Luca called, one day.

I didn't need to go to the greenhouse to see them.

'Oh, my God!' I shrieked.

These were monster veg.

'Six foot tall,' Luca said, stunned.

Our six grandchildren think they're the most amazing things.

Well, I guess they are!

After all, not many people can say their veg towers over them!

expecting again.

But, at 20 weeks, I sadly suffered a miscarriage.

Heartbreaking.

'Why?' I asked docs.

They explained that it was one of those things.

Nothing I'd done wrong.

But I couldn't shake the thought that me being so unfit hadn't helped.

And after that came even more worries...

What kind of mum was I being to my boys?

I couldn't run around and play with them. Just walking upstairs felt like I'd completed a marathon.

And I was risking health problems in the future.

Diabetes, heart disease...

What if I left my kids without their mum?

Suddenly, I had a new determination.

So, in August 2011, I went to a Slimming World meeting. Stepping on the scales, I saw my weight was 16st 9lb.

It's now or never, I thought.

So I threw myself into my new, healthier diet.

I started cooking pasta with healthy, home-made sauces and huge, delicious salads.

'I've lost 7lb,' I beamed to Jason a month later.

But there was just one hitch.

I couldn't clear the house of all sweet treats. After all, I still had cake orders coming in!

Amazingly, though, I didn't slip up and indulge.

'The pounds are coming off, yet I'm doing more baking than ever,' I told my friends.

'You're mad,' they said. 'You'll sabotage your diet!'

'Nope, I'm still allowed treats in moderation,' I insisted.

Anyway, as I concentrated on stirring the sugar, butter and chocolate, then baking my confections, the sweet smell took my mind off eating.

In December 2012, I reached my goal weight of 10st 8lb.

'You've lost your big bum,' giggled Alex and Ben.

I'm now a svelte size 12 and my cakes are more popular than ever.

In fact, I'm even thinking of turning my part-time baking sideline into a proper business.

I still love my baked goods, but now I know when it's time to stop scoffing.

I'm proof that you can have your cake and eat it – well, just a little bit!



SOME IDENTITIES HAVE BEEN CHANGED TO PROTECT PRIVACY.

CLOSING DATE FOR ALL ENTRIES IS 21 MAY 2015
(Three working days later for postal entries)

Chat PUZZLES 5

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Puzzle 8

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Puzzle 9

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Puzzle 10

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Puzzle 12

GOOD LUCK TO ALL OUR READERS!

Name.....

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How to enter

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WRITE

To reply by post, fill out the coupon left with your answers and contact details and send it to,

Chat Best of Issue 2, PO Box 502, Leicester LE94 0AB

Only one entry per person. Competition details form part of these terms and conditions. Entry is open to residents of the UK only, except employees (and their families) of Time Inc. (UK) Ltd, its printers and agents, the suppliers of the prizes and any other companies associated with the competitions. The winner(s) must be aged 18 or over. Proof of identity and age may be required. Use of false name or address will result in disqualification. Entries that are incomplete, illegible, indecipherable, or inaudible (if made by phone) will not be valid and deemed void. All entries must be made directly by the person entering the competition. Entries made online using methods generated by a script, macro or the use of automated devices will be void. No responsibility can be accepted for entries lost, damaged or delayed in the post, due to computer error in transit. The prizes are as stated, are not transferable to another individual and no cash or other alternatives will be offered. The winner(s) is (are) responsible for expenses and arrangements not specifically included in the prizes, including any necessary travel documents, passports and visas. Prizes are subject to availability and the prize suppliers' terms and conditions. The promoters reserve the right to amend or alter the terms of competitions at any time and reject entries from entrants not entering into the spirit of the competition. In the event of a prize being unavailable, the promoter reserves the right to offer an alternative prize of equal or greater value. The winner(s) agree(s) to the use of their name, photograph and disclosure of county of residence and will co-operate with any other reasonable requests by Time Inc. (UK) Ltd relating to any post-winning publicity. Unless stated otherwise all postal entries must be made on the relevant coupon or form printed in the magazine. Unless stated otherwise the winner(s) will be drawn at random from all correct entries received by the closing date stated within the promotional material. Reasonable efforts will be made to contact the winner(s). If the winner(s) cannot be contacted, or are unable to comply with these terms and conditions, the Promoter reserves the right to offer the prize to the next eligible entrant drawn at random, or in the event that the promotion is being judged the Promoter reserves the right to offer the prize to the runner(s)-up selected by the same judges. Confirmation of the prize will be made in writing to the winner(s). Failure to respond and/or provide an address for delivery, or failure to meet the eligibility requirements may result in forfeiture of the prize. Where applicable, the decision of the judges is final based on the criteria set out in the promotion and no correspondence will be entered into over this decision. Competitions may be modified or withdrawn at any time. The provider of the prize is specified within the promotional material. The Promoter is Time Inc. (UK) Ltd, Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark Street, London SE1 0SU. In the event of a discrepancy between these standard terms and conditions and the details in the promotional material, the details of the promotional material shall prevail. A list of winners will be available by writing into the publisher of the magazine or website at the Promoter's address no earlier than six weeks, unless otherwise stated, after the close of the competition. Only the surname and county of the winners will be disclosed. Where a coupon or token is necessary for entry, residents of Northern Ireland only may send a stamped self addressed envelope to Promotions Team, 6th Floor, Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark Street, London SE1 0SU, for a free copy of such token or coupon.



We won!

Chat winners issue 1

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£50 CASH

K Mitchell, Norfolk.

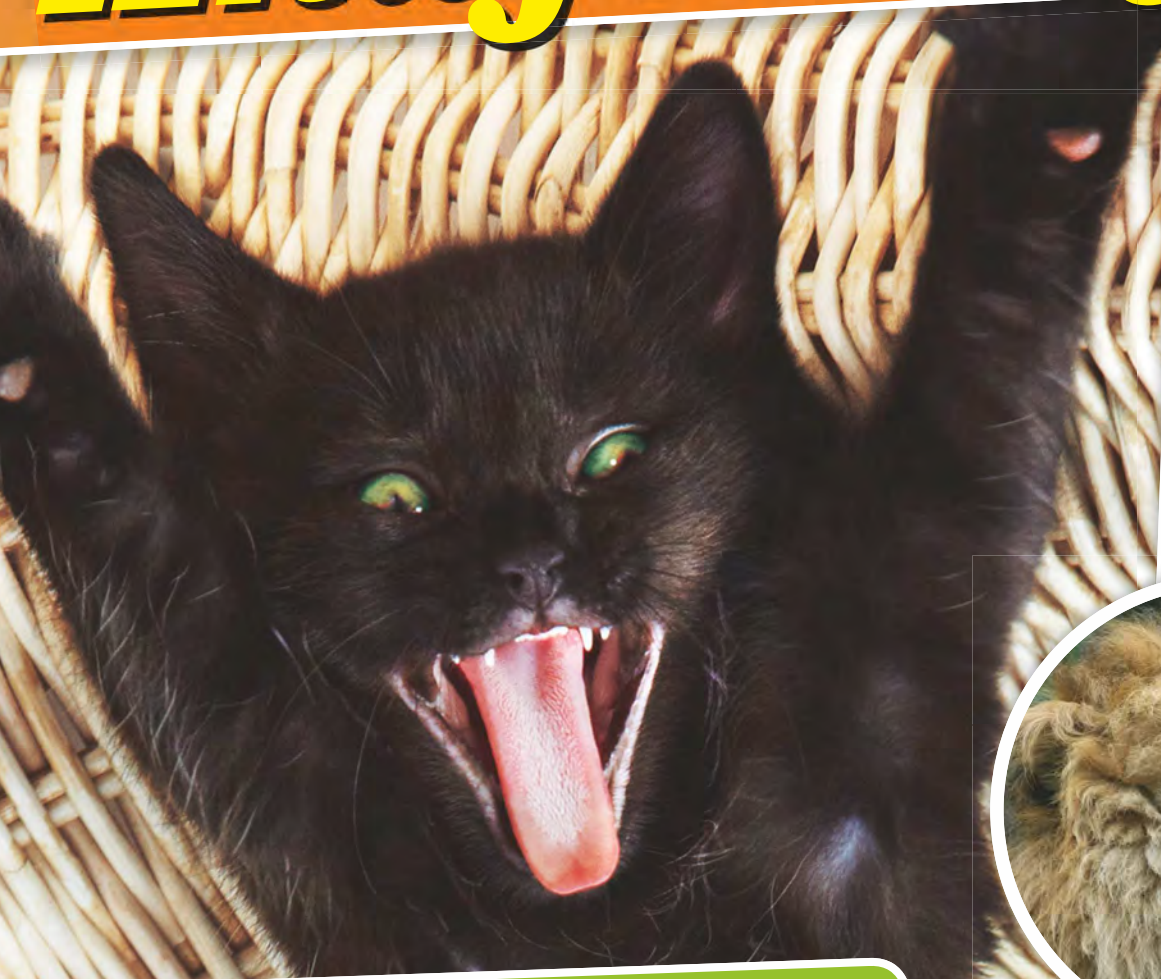
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D Rumsey, Stevenage; P Hicks, Ripon, North Yorkshire; M Dean, Gravesend, Kent;
M Nokling, Chorley, Lancashire; A Smith, Hatfield, Hertfordshire.

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And finally...



A nap would be grrreat!



I'm so furry sleepy!



She needs a lion lie down!

Yawn to be WILD!

This tired tiger, lethargic couple of lions and cranky kitten are in desperate need of a *catnap*. The furry critters look like they've had their fill of prowling around and are *feline* like a bit of shut-eye. They might look cute, but one thing is for sure... We wouldn't want to encounter them if they got up on the wrong side of bed!

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